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INDEPENDENT

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Republic of Ireland 45p

WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 1995

**FIVE CLASSIC HOLMES
OR TWO TO BE W**
page 10

IN SECTION TWO

After one year, three months and 20 days, OJ Simpson walks free

TIM CORNWELL
Los Angeles

The case that began with a slow-motion televised chase down southern California's freeways ended yesterday with another convoy, as police cars and media helicopters shadowed the bus carrying OJ Simpson from the courtroom to the jail, then tailed the white van taking him home a free man.

Orenthal James Simpson was acquitted by a jury of the brutal murders of his ex-wife Nicole and her friend Ronald Goldman. He walked into his Los Angeles estate to be embraced by his friend and fellow football player, Al Cowlings, who last June was accused of trying to

Inside

- Dream team falls: Bumbled trial page 2
- Appetite for trash: OJ's uncertain future page 3
- Leading advice: page 4
- Buyer's remorse: page 5

drive Simpson to Mexico. In a case that has come to capture the racial divides in America, where most whites firmly believed in Simpson's guilt, TV audiences of mostly black Californians, watching the denouement in churches and high schools, erupted in roars of delight.

"The prosecution had a lot of loopholes in their side of the case. I think the jury did a fine job," said Danny Bakewell of Brotherhood Crusade, a black community group.

There were gasps and weeping in the courtroom and outside it as the verdict was read. Simpson hugged his lead attorney, Johnnie Cochran, and returned to the LA County jail to be discharged.

Simpson's 71-year-old wheelchair-bound mother Eunice lifted her hands as if in prayer when he was cleared of both



Defining moment: OJ Simpson with his lead attorney, Johnnie Cochran, as he prepares to walk out of the Los Angeles courtroom a free man

Photograph: Globenet

first and second degree murder counts by a unanimous vote. "I knew that my son was innocent," she said later. "I kept the faith and I had confidence in his representation."

Kim Goldman, the young sister of the murder victim who was in court for every day of the case and was dubbed the conscience of the trial of the century, sobbed uncontrollably.

Her father Fred, who had labelled Simpson as a murderer, seemed to gasp for breath.

The Los Angeles Police Department went on tactical alert with marksmen on rooftops around the courthouse and helicopters buzzing. Crowds lined the streets around the courtroom behind yellow police tape, but quickly dispersed.

In a statement read by his

older son Jason, Simpson pledged to "pursue as my primary goal in life the killers of his ex-wife. They are out there somewhere. Whatever it takes to bring them in... I will find them somehow."

Simpson, who did not testify in his own defence but said early on he was "100 per cent" not guilty, said: "I am relieved that this part of the incredible

nightmare that occurred is over. My first obligation is to my young children who will be raised in the way that Nicole and I had planned... I would not, could not, and did not kill anyone." Sydney, 9, and Justin, 7, are currently in the care of Nicole's Brown's parents.

Mr Cochran said Simpson was "ecstatic and wants to get on to his life." While in his closing

statements to the jury, Mr Cochran was blamed for inflaming the race issue, he turned the post-trial focus on the prosecution's timeline for the murders. The defence argued that Simpson simply did not have time to commit the murders.

But asked whether race had overcome the facts, Mr Cochran said: "Race plays a part

the defence "dream team" began with a prayer of thanks and at one point burst into laughter, prosecutors looked blank and grim.

District Attorney Gil Garcetti, up for re-election in 1996, said he was profoundly disappointed and angry, and suggested the jury's snap decision "was based on emotions that overcame the reason."

The deliberations of the jury of eight black women, two white women and one Hispanic and one black man, who had been poker-faced through the trial, remained a mystery. The jury asked Judge Lance Ito to preserve their anonymity, and asked not to speak to either press or the competing attorneys.

Assistant Prosecutor Christopher Darden, who in the courtroom appeared bitterly offended by the defence's playing the race card, said he accepted the jury's verdict but added: "We came here in search of justice, you will have to be the judge of whether any of us found it today."

Simpson, 48, faced a possible life prison term without parole if convicted of first degree murder in the 12 June 1994 killings. It may not be long now before he attempts to cash in on his acquittal. Even before yesterday's verdict, intermediaries for Mr Simpson had filed formal patent requests with the US government to use the O J Simpson name on a series of products including calendars, children's toys, place mats and, above all, a new line of O J Simpson clothing. Simpson is also rumoured to be considering giving a one-off, post-trial interview to pay-per-view television in the United States with CNN star interviewer Larry King. Boxing star Mike Tyson, after his release from prison this summer after being convicted of rape, staged a comeback fight on pay-per-view that netted him an instant \$25 million.

in everything in America and we need to understand that... This was a real heck of a trial."

The aftermath of a case that was fought out for the TV cameras quickly saw a series of duelling news conferences. While

Blair pledges to build 'a new Britain'

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

Tony Blair yesterday sought to seize the high ground of patriotism and national unity from the Tories in a crusading, technocratic and visionary speech which promised to "build a new Britain" as a "nation for all the people, where old divisions are cast out."

He dramatised his pledge to usher Britain into a techno-logical "new age" by announcing a deal with British Telecom to allow it into the cable entertainment market in return for linking every school, college, hospital and library to the information superhighway for free.

The Labour leader promised his party, still reeling from 16 months of internal reform since he became leader: "I didn't

come into politics to transform the Labour Party, I came into politics to transform Britain."

And he sent a thrill through the Brighton conference by pledging that he did not want "a one-term Labour government that ends in disillusion... I want a Labour government that governs for a generation and changes Britain for good."

Mr Blair appealed directly to voters to entrust "a new generation" with the task of meeting the challenges needed "to change the basis of this country's thinking of the last 100 years."

Having brought the conference to its feet at the outset by introducing an emotional Lady Wilson - widow of Harold - Mr Blair went on to invite inevitable comparisons with the late Labour premier's "white heat of technology" speech in

1963 when Labour was last on the verge of a lasting electoral breakthrough.

He also went out of his way to restate the "moral purpose" of his socialism and declared:

Inside

- What is the Labour Party's new vision? page 6
- Labour's new strategy page 7
- Family life page 8
- Section 28 page 9

that he tried to live his life by the "simple truths". He said: "I am my brother's keeper. I will not walk by on the other side."

In a speech which did not once mention John Major by

name, he excoriated the flag-waving patriotism of the Tories and said that many of the thousands of war veterans he had encountered during the VJ-Day celebrations had called to him to "get the Tories out". He declared: "These are our people. They love this country, just as we do. It is because they love this country that they look to us to change it."

Declaring that "education is the best economic policy there is", Mr Blair announced that his education spokesman, David Blunkett, would begin early talks with the main computer companies to secure a private/public finance deal aimed at giving every schoolchild access to a laptop computer. However, Roy Hattersley, the former deputy Labour leader, last night set himself against the party leadership's education policy

by calling for the abolition of private schools.

Mr Blair pledged a new high-tech link in the National Health Service between GPs and regional "centres of excellence". He produced a well-trailed £60m plan to reduce primary school classes to 30 and to wear single parents off benefit and into work. He floated the possibility of up to 3,000 more policemen on the streets - funded by abandoning the Tories' identity-card scheme.

And on social security he promised more detailed plans for removing the "stigma of the means test" by a pension guarantee based on a mix of public and private-sector provision. He also said he would hand over the lottery to a non-profit making concern when Camelot's contract expired in six years' time.

Mr Blair did not shrink from

warning the conference of the "hard choices" Labour would face in government. He would refuse "to take risks" with inflation and in a stark message to union leaders declared that on public-sector pay Labour would have to "say no as well as yes."

There was the faintest of echoes of President John Kennedy in his promise to make "new Britain" the "young country of my generation's dreams."

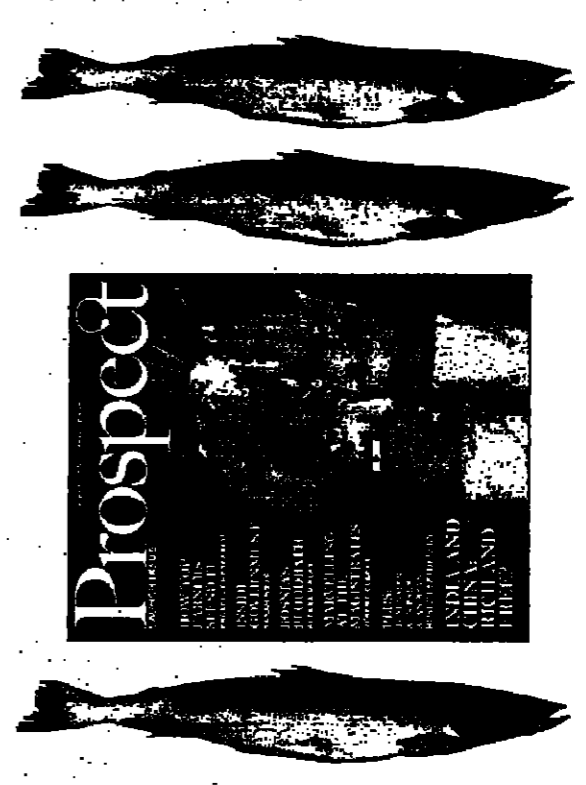
In an ambitious attempt to restore moral authority to party politics, Mr Blair reaffirmed his ethical socialist belief in community with a declaration that a "United Kingdom" was one "where your child in distress is my child, your parent ill and in pain, is my parent, your friend unemployed or helpless, my friend, your neighbour my neighbour. That is the true patriotism of a nation."

IN BRIEF		COMMENT	
Rosemary West goes on trial The trial of Rosemary West, 41, on 10 murder charges, including that of her own eldest daughter, began at Winchester Crown Court amid huge media interest. A jury of eight men and four women was sworn in and then sent away until at least Friday while the judge, Mr Justice Mantell, hears legal submissions from barristers. Page 5	Have-a-go Howard "Have-a-go heroes", who use violence to defend themselves against burglars and vandals should be treated more sympathetically by the criminal justice system and police, the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, said. Page 11	Begging crackdown The Government announced that it was reviewing vagrancy and other laws and urging the police and voluntary workers to get tough with vagrants, drunks and beggars, in an attempt to clean up the streets. Page 4	Disunited colours Manchester United fans, upset by the transfers of star players, were dealt another blow as the club unveiled soaring revenue from its widely criticised merchandising operation. Page 7
Pollution inquiry Irish, British and US scientists are to investigate if pollution is to blame for widespread cattle deaths and human illnesses affecting up to 20 farms in western Ireland. Page 10	Verdict: Guilty VERDICT: GUILTY	News Analysis: Will Canary Wharf beat the City for supremacy? Page 17	Tom Surtcliffe: Deep-fried Mars bars and other delicacies Page 19
		Mary Kenny: Liberalism is the destroyer of Irish Catholicism Page 18	Angela Lambert's Dordogne Diary Page 17
		Bryan Appleyard: Was the OJ trial for real or a movie nightmare? Page 19	Andrew Marr on Tony Blair's conference speech in Brighton Page 19
		Weather: Central and eastern England will start wet and windy, but this will clear to leave the whole of England and Wales bright and breezy with scattered showers. Section Two, page 21	

section ONE BUSINESS 20-22 COMMENT 23-25 CROSSWORD 28 GAZETTE 16
LAW REPORT 16 LEADING ARTICLES 18 LETTERS 18 NEWS 2-15
OBITUARIES 16 SHARES 23 SPORT 25-28 UNIT TRUSTS 24

section TWO ARTS 8-11 CHESS 22 CROSSWORD 22 FINANCE & LAW 12-17
HEALTH 4,5 LIFE 4,7 LISTINGS 20,21 REVIEWS 9
THEATRE 11 TELEVISION & RADIO 23,24 WEATHER 21

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THE ACQUITTAL OF OJ SIMPSON

The OJ Simpson case: a chronology

JUNE 13 1994



1994

June 13 The bodies of Simpson's ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman are found outside her Brentwood townhouse. Simpson returns home after an overnight flight to Chicago, is questioned by police and then released.
June 16 Victims are buried in separate ceremonies. Simpson attends his ex-wife's funeral.
June 17 Simpson is arrested after a nationally televised slow-speed pursuit along Los Angeles freeways.

JUNE 17



June 20 Simpson pleads not guilty.
June 24 Judge Cecil Mills holds a grand jury probe into the murders, saying panel has been tainted by unprecedented media coverage. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and flamboyant trial lawyer F. Lee Bailey join defence team.
June 30 Simpson's preliminary hearing begins.
July 6 Judge Kathleen Kennedy-Powell orders Simpson to stand trial.
July 20 Simpson offers \$500,000 reward for information leading to the "real killer or killers".
July 22 Simpson pleads "absolutely, 100 per cent not guilty" in his arraignment. Case assigned to Judge Lance Ito. Noted trial lawyer Johnnie Cochran joins defence.
Sept. 9 Los Angeles district attorney's office says it will not seek death penalty against Simpson.
Sept. 26 Jury selection begins.
Nov. 3 Jury of 12 sworn in.
Dec. 8 12 alternate jurors sworn in.

1995

Jan. 11 Jury sequestered.
Jan. 24 Prosecutor Marcia Clark begins opening statement.
Jan. 25 Cochran begins defence opening statement.
Jan. 27 Testimony begins.
Feb. 1 Ron Ship, a former LAPD officer and friend of Simpson, testifies that Simpson told him he dreamed of killing Nicole Simpson.
Feb. 3 Denise Brown takes the witness stand to testify about Simpson's alleged abuse of her sister, Nicole Simpson.
Feb. 12 Jury tours crime scene and Simpson's mansion.
Feb. 24 Arguments erupt over testimony of housekeeper Rose Lopez, forcing Ito to take her testimony on videotape.

MARCH 9



April 21 To protest the removal of three deputies, half of the jurors appear at the courthouse wearing black.
June 15 Simpson tries on bloody gloves in court and pronounces them "too small".
July 6 Prosecution rests case.
July 10 Defence begins its case by calling Simpson's daughter, Arnelle, to the stand.
Aug. 29 Portions of taped interviews with Fuhrman played in court in which he is heard uttering racist slurs.
Sept. 6 Taking the witness stand with jury absent, Fuhrman asserts Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination and refuses to answer questions.
Sept. 22 Simpson proclaims his innocence in a surprise courtroom statement; both sides rest; Ito instructs jury.
Sept. 25 Prosecution's Clark begins closing statement.
Sept. 27 Prosecution concludes first phase of closing argument. Defence begins closing statement.
Sept. 28 Defence wraps up closing argument.
Sept. 29 Prosecution completes final phase of closing argument. Case is handed over to jury.
Oct. 2 Jury tells Judge Ito it has reached a verdict. Ito says he will announce it on Tuesday morning.



JUNE 15

The Issues: Questions remain at close of a trial in which American justice was put in the dock

Whites' idol becomes black hero

JOHN CARLIN
Washington

If every person who stood trial in the US had OJ Simpson's money, America's jails would not be as packed as they are. Mr Simpson spent more than \$8m (£5m) on his defence, securing the services of a "dream team" of lawyers and investigators who succeeded in sowing sufficient reasonable doubt in the minds of the jurors to win him a unanimous, and surprisingly swift, not guilty verdict.

Fully half of the population, three-quarters of them white, delivered a verdict of guilty, according to the polls. And this, in millions of cases, on the strength of having watched the proceedings on television as closely as the jurors themselves.

The evidence compiled by the prosecution, notably samples of Mr Simpson's blood and hairs found at the murder scene and a bloody glove found at his home, would have convicted many an ordinary criminal depending for his life on the services of a regular public defender. This is not least because Mr Simpson, who did not take the witness stand, failed to provide an alibi. It is still not known, after a trial that lasted nine months, what Mr Simpson was doing at the time of the murders of his ex-wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

The only conclusion the jury could have reached was that the police investigators in the case, motivated by racial hatred, had planted the evidence. Or, at any rate, that sufficient suspicion ex-

isted to believe they might have done so as to render impossible a verdict of guilt without reasonable doubt.

It was due to the dogged resourcefulness of the private investigators recruited by Mr Simpson's defence team that evidence came before the court revealing that Detective Mark Fuhrman had lied to the court when he testified that he had not used the word "nigger" in the previous 10 years. It was due to the skill of Johnnie Cochran, who led Mr Simpson's defence, that three-quarters of the way through the trial the man in the dock became, effectively, not Mr Simpson, but Mr Fuhrman, who on the night of the murders found a blood-spattered glove on Mr Simpson's property.

From the word go, Mr

Cochran presented the trial as a race drama. "Do the right thing," he urged the jurors, nine of whom were black, during his concluding arguments last week. Explicitly, he told them that a victory for the prosecution would be a victory for the Los Angeles police department and, by extension, a defeat for the black civil rights movement.

Chris Darden, the black prosecution lawyer, pleaded with the jurors to see through Mr Cochran's "smoke" and concentrate on the facts of the case. American racism was not on trial here. Mr Simpson was.

Mr Simpson was viewed by many black Americans as black in appearance only. He was what is known dismissively in the ghettos as an "Oreo", the name of a popular biscuit that is chocolate on the outside and white inside. He lived in a big estate in a white neighbourhood; he drove a Bentley; he played golf with white big shots; he exchanged a black wife for a white one; he was an all-American sports hero who reassured whites' wishful notions that racism in America was dead, that there was nothing of substance for blacks to whine about.

Mr Cochran's magic was to transform "OJ", the creation of establishment media hype, back into Orenthal James, his mother's son.

The second irony that still has to be played out concerns Mr Fuhrman, who may end up in jail for perjury, while the man he tried to jail goes free. The one thing both men may have in common is that, whatever happens, their reputations among vast sectors of the American population have been destroyed.

But the biggest loser of all is likely to be America's criminal justice system. Right or wrong, Middle America's complacent belief in the constitutional notion of equality before the law - for rich and poor, famous or unknown - has been shot to pieces. The lesson of the OJ Simpson trial that many millions of Americans will absorb is that as with politics, so with the law: money talks.

The verdict: A key police witness's racial jibes undermined prosecution's forensic evidence

How a trial turned on a bloody glove

TIM CORNWELL
Los Angeles

Orenthal James Simpson - track star, TV commentator, comedy movie actor - is, according to the law, an innocent man. Argument will rage for years about the weight of evidence against him. At the very least - innocent or guilty - he benefited from one of the most confused and bungled prosecutions of a high-profile case in American legal history.

According to the prosecution, he was a cold-blooded murderer, a man who brutally dispatched his ex-wife and a friend and, within the space of an hour, showered, changed and took a limousine to the airport.

According to the defence, he was the victim of a hurried plan by the LA police department to frame a celebrity - and, more importantly, a black celebrity.

The pivotal moment in the trial was the argument surrounding a bloody glove found near the murder scene and spots of blood found on OJ's drive.

According to the prosecution the DNA match-up between this blood and Simpson's blood was a conclusive 57 billion to one shot. The defence alleged that the blood and glove were planted by the LA police department. Some credence was given to this claim when it emerged that Detective Mark Fuhrman, the policeman who found the glove, was an inveterate racist.

Judge Lance Ito allowed the jury to hear extracts of a taped conversation with Fuhrman in which he used the word nigger. Although the judge did not expose the mainly black jury to the full tapes, experienced trial watchers - and leaks from the jury room - suggested that OJ could not be convicted from that moment.

How strong was the evidence against OJ?

The entire 12-month trial seemed to turn, in the end, on OJ's chauffeur-driven journey on the night of the crime from his estate, in Brentwood, near Beverly Hills, to LA international airport. On Monday, just before they announced that they had reached a verdict, the jury asked to hear once again the testimony of his chauffeur, Allan Park. Mr Park told the court that, at 10.40pm on the night of the murder, he buzzed the intercom at Simpson's gate without an answer. Fifteen minutes later, he buzzed again. Simpson answered, saying he had overslept and was in the shower. In the intervening time, Park said he saw a man in dark clothing enter the house.

The testimony - never chal-

lenged in the trial - appeared to undermine the central assertion of the defence: that Simpson was at home practising his golf swing from 9.40pm to 11pm - while his wife was being virtually decapitated two miles away. At 11pm that night her mangled body was found alongside that of Ronald Goldman, a waiter at a local restaurant.

OJ, it seemed, had an opportunity to commit the crime. What of motive and proof?

The prosecution asserted that OJ was perpetually jealous, a man driven by the need to bring his ex-wife under his control. According to this version, he took Goldman for his wife's lover, although this was never proven. On 25 October 1993, just nine months before her death, Nicole Simpson called 911 for the police. "My husband - or ex-husband - has just broken into my house and he's ranting and raving outside in the front yard," Nicole told the dispatcher. In the background of the tape, played in court, OJ is heard raging about a National Enquirer story about the couple and slamming on a door. "I don't give a - any more -," he yells.

Much depended on the bloody glove found at the murder scene and a trail of blood drops nearby and in his own driveway. Blood on the rear gear of Nicole Simpson's condominium, retrieved several weeks after the crime, also matched his. Blood on a sock found in Simpson's bedroom matched Nicole's. An FBI hair and fibre expert matched fibres found on a knit cap near the bodies and on a leather glove found behind Mr Simpson's house with carpeting in his Ford Bronco.

Richard Rubin, a former glove company executive, said he was "100 per cent certain" that the bloody gloves found at Nicole's home and Simpson's were the same Aris Leather-Lights style number 70263 with Brasser stitching that Simpson sported in a photograph at a football game in 1991.

But all this evidence was discredited by the bungled early stages of the police investigation and the destruction of Detective Fuhrman's character by the tapes proving his racist attitudes - something he had denied on oath in court.

If not OJ, who? The defence claimed that a Colombian cocaine cartel killed Nicole and her friend by mistake. They had, the defence claimed, been sent to assassinate one of her friends.

No convincing evidence was offered that such a plot ever existed.



Family's relief - OJ Simpson's mother Eunice (left in hat) and other relatives greet the verdict Photograph: Globenet

A quick dash to judgment

TIM CORNWELL

Early last month Judge Lance Ito reported his jurors were "going nuts" with frustration and boredom, cut off from the world in their un-named hotel. They returned from a group boat trip "barking at the seals". As far back as March there were reports of bitter infighting.

In the end their overwhelming desire seems to have been to get it over as fast as possible. "All we can tell is that we have 12 jurors that made up their minds a long time ago. They want to go home so badly that they simply don't care about the appearance of their own rush to judgement," said Peter Aranel, a Los Angeles law professor.

Television news stations in

Los Angeles reported yesterday that the jurors were actually packing on Monday morning. Carl Douglas, the only member of the Simpson team to reach the court in time to hear they had reached a decision, said: "Surprised doesn't begin to describe my feelings. I am stunned at the speed."

The case involved 126 witnesses and filled 40,000 pages of trial transcript. But the jury reached a verdict on double-murder charges in about four hours. It led to some speculation that they had broken one of the cardinal rules of the jury room, which was not to discuss the case with each other before it was over.

The jury appeared to prove virtually all the vaunted legal experts, who agreed there would be weeks of deliberation, entirely wrong. It hinted that they were as sick of the case as they were of each other's company.

And it suggested that the high drama of the last week, in which the chief prosecutor, Marcia Clark, spoke of the victims calling for justice with their hair and blood, and the defence attorney, Johnnie Cochran, appealed to racial justice, washed over people.

The jury consisted of eight black women and one black man, two white women and one Hispanic man. Most commentators focused on race, and gender was largely overlooked. It was black women who domi-

nated the trial of a black male hero. The eldest on the panel was 71, a retired cleaner, married for 40 years. A heavy smoker, she said in jury selection she "never heard of no OJ Simpson" and never read anything "except the horse sheet".

The two white women were a 22-year-old insurance claims adjuster and a 60-year-old divorcee. She was reported to be the only one to look at OJ Simpson as they returned with their news of a verdict.

One dismissed juror compared life under sequestration to a chain gang. Members were woken at 5.30am, and were allowed to talk to each other only in the corridor or the cafeteria. They were banished alone to their rooms at night.

'Dream team' put police in frame

The issue of race split OJ Simpson's own defence team in the last days of the trial, writes Tim Cornwell. Johnnie Cochran's bodyguards from the radical black Nation of Islam, and his comparison of the leading prosecution witness, Mark Fuhrman, to Adolf Hitler, Robert Shapiro.

But the "dream team", whose costs, estimated at several million dollars, will probably be eclipsed by the money their client can earn now that he has been acquitted, delivered a powerful twin-track defence. They fiercely attacked technical evidence while portraying Mr Simpson as the victim of a

racist frame-up. The defence produced blue-chip forensic experts and criminologists like Michael Baden and Henry Lee. At the same time they found the screenwriter, Laura Hart McKinny, who tape-recorded Mr Fuhrman's racist language and stories of planting evidence and covering it up.

They were drawn mostly from a coterie of Los Angeles lawyers who shared a list of celebrity defendants. Mr Shapiro, 43, at Marlon Brando's side, pulled off a 10-year voluntary manslaughter deal for Mr Brando's son Christian, who was accused of murder. He

was known as a star negotiator.

He shared the leadership of the team with Mr Cochran, whose own client list included Michael Jackson (referred by Elizabeth Taylor), the rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg, accused of a drive-by murder, and Reginald Denny, the white trucker who was nearly beaten to death in the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Mr Cochran, 56, was a long time friend of Mr Simpson, though before he was hired he worked as a television commentator. He has specialised in turning on courtroom passion for minority defendants, and his oratory supposedly reduced one Simpson juror to tears. His law firm has collected \$40m

(£25.1m) in lawsuits against the Los Angeles police department and other government bodies.

The nine-member defence team also included the legendary counsel F Lee Bailey. But in his much-hyped cross-examination of Mr Fuhrman, Mr Bailey failed to shake the detective's composure.

Instead the relatively unknown New York attorney Barry Schenk took the role of Mr Cochran's sidekick.

His repeated interruptions of the summing-up by the chief prosecutor, Marcia Clark, earned him the ire of Judge Lance Ito, who told him twice to sit down.

The ten

OJ blink
daylight
uncertain

3

Silence, a sh
intake of bre
and disbel

We're boldly going where
no-one has gone before.
Your bedroom, study, living room, kitchen...

OLIVETTI ENVISION IS HERE. THE HOME LEARNING, COMMUNICATION AND ENTERTAINMENT PC.

olivetti
PERSONAL COMPUTERS

صوتك من اليمين

THE TRIAL OF OJ SIMPSON

The tendency to moralise, the appetite for trash

Believe it or not, as the word "unique" again becomes the most overworked word in the American language, we have been here before. It was 1935, year of the first and – for connoisseurs – the enduring Trial Hauptmann was convicted of the kidnapping and murder of the baby son of the aviator Charles Lindbergh who, unlike Orenthal James Simpson, truly then was the most famous man alive.

When the similarly sequestered jury produced its verdict 60 years ago, 6,000 people, including Jack Benny, Ford Madox Ford, Damon Runyon and 400 less celebrated backs were on hand in the tiny New Jersey town of Flemington, while an AP reporter scooped the world from the courtroom with a radio microphone. Now we are live from LA, in the age of the global village. But the principle is unchanged: a gar-

ish extravaganza, where life has first imitated and then surpassed art, amid utter media abandon.

Stripped to its essentials, the OJ trial has been a poor-quality television soap opera, run amok: in the words of Lance Morrow, the resident essayist of *Time* magazine this week, "a perfect demonstration of how the American tendency to moralise has gone into partnership with the American appetite for trash". Into this mix might also be stirred the country's love-hate relationship with the law, and the overarching power of television.

Indubitably, the interests of brevity and legal manners would have been better served by keeping the camera out of the courtroom. The reckoning is not all bad: Americans have learned much about the technicalities of their legal system, the days of numbingly tedious

testimony and abstruse points of procedure, discussed in countless attorney huddles, which are the stuff of any trial.

But in the Simpson saga television, supreme adjudicator of fame and fortune in the contemporary US, has turned justice into a circus. Defence and prosecution lawyers alike have danced to its tune, pitching their case as much to the general public as to the 12 jurors whose views were ultimately the only ones that mattered.

As murder cases go, the State of California vs OJ Simpson is pretty routine, apart from the identity of the defendant. Without television, it would have been over in two months, not nine. Television has exposed the bloated business of celebrity law in its full self-important silliness – not just the strutting, hot-shot defence attorneys but the parasites who flourish in a system where the letter of the law so

Rupert Cornwell studies what the trial reveals about a nation's soul

easily displaces common sense: the witness coaches, the highly-paid consultants who have turned jury selection into a small industry, and sundry other "experts" of every hue. Alas, the market is there.

Three cable networks, CNN, Court TV and the E! (Entertainment) channel, ran gavel-to-gavel coverage, with CNN reporting a fivefold jump in ratings from the Before-OJ era when news consisted of mere trivialities like Bosnia, Haiti and the massacres in Rwanda. Once it began, the trial was always there – if not live, then via replays of key testimony and the incessant chatter of rent-a-mouth lawyers, all blurring into a seamless and timeless separate universe.

And it must be said, OJ out-soaped the soaps. The case had everything: race, celebrities, the LA high life, and brutal murder. It could be scored from the armchair, like a football game. Occasionally it would yield pride of place to great events in the world beyond – the Republican sweep of Congress, the Oklahoma City bombing and the continuing agony of Bosnia. But each would subside, and the Simpson case took over the American consciousness again, hypnotic and (as someone remarked of the French) bottomless in its superficiality.

With the possible exception of the Gulf War, America has not had a topic of conversation to match it since the Kennedy assassination. Since January,

OJ has accounted for more minutes of coverage on ABC, CBS and NBC prime-time news than Bosnia and Oklahoma combined, and 13 times as much as the debate on Medicare – whose outcome truly will affect the lives of every American. It has been most and drunk for hundreds – make that thousands – of talk shows. Larry King, CNN's star chat-show host, has lived off it, and so have his imitators. Throughout, Gresham's law has operated to perfection. The bad has consistently driven out the good, and just when it seemed it couldn't get any tackier, it did.

During that earlier festival of bad taste, the Lindbergh trial, one reporter prised the tiny coffin open to photograph the decayed remains of the 20-month-old baby. Six decades later, the *Globe* tabloid has provided an equally tawdry footnote to the Simpson case by

publishing crime scene photos of the backed and bloody corpses of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. "An important news event," said the paper, which refused to specify how much it had paid, and to whom, for its scoop.

Which leads to the other villain of the piece: money. The trial and its spin-offs like books, souvenirs and the higher television advertising rates it generated, are reckoned to equal the GDP of a middle-sized Central American nation. Nor is it over: jurors will sell their memoirs for small fortunes (though at least they've earned them), while the bidding for "exclusives" will reach the stratosphere: "You name it, we'll top it," as one television producer put it this week. Hence the hype, essential to keep up the ratings which pay for it all. Hence the psychobabble about the "defining event of the 1990s", and a "Shakespearean

drama" featuring "the Othello of the 20th century".

In fact the OJ case, unlike the Lindbergh affair which generates controversy to this day, may be quickly forgotten. The trial has been less tragedy than farce, a spectacle defining nothing except the blindingly obvious, that race is an enduring problem in the US, and that the human species likes to be entertained.

Looking back on 15 lunatic months, the character who best conveys their flavour is not Johnnie Cochran, Judge Lance Ito, Marcia Clark or the genuinely tragic figure of Fred Goldman, the victim's father, nor even the Moor of Rockingham Avenue himself – but a vapid failed actor and Simpson house guest called Brian "Kato" Kaelin. A few days in the witness box last spring briefly made him the most famous man in America. Kato who?

OJ blinks into the daylight of an uncertain future

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington
DAVID USBORNE
New York

The freshly acquitted OJ Simpson returned one last time to Los Angeles County Jail, to collect his personal items, undergo a quick formal check of his record – and walk into a future that is completely uncertain.

Technically the former football star is free, but he is unlikely to quickly shake off the case which for more than 15 months has transfixed and polarised the United States. His personal life surely will remain in almost unbearable turmoil. Civil lawsuits for "wrongful death" are outstanding from the families of his former wife Nicole Simpson and of Ronald Goldman, while he must confront the fraught matter of custody of Sidney, 10, and Justin, 7, his two children by Nicole. They are presently being cared for by Nicole's family, which is convinced their mother was murdered by their father.

Whether the suits go forward remains to be seen. But if they do, the problems for Simpson will be considerable. A civil case requires only that "a preponderance of the evidence" proves his involvement in the murders, instead of the stricter "beyond a reasonable doubt" that state prosecutors Marcia Clark and Chris Darden failed to demonstrate in the trial which ended yesterday.

Defending civil suits, and meeting the heavy damages which might result, would be expensive – even for a man once worth \$10m and now stands to make millions more by telling his side of the story.

Professionally, OJ Simpson's days as a football commentator and commercial pitchman for

Hertz rental cars – or any other product – are surely done. Whatever the court verdict, polls show 65 per cent of the country, and an even higher percentage of whites, believe he is a murderer.

At least though he is not destined for the poor house. Although the cost of his all-star defence team is reckoned to have virtually consumed his previous fortune, other income sources beckon. One possibility, already studied by advisers, is a pay-per-view TV show in which



Running back the perfect US hero. Photograph: Allsport

Simpson expounds his innocence. Another book may be in the works.

From a San Francisco slum to the pinnacle of sporting success, OJ Simpson's journey made him the perfect American hero. So dazzling were his accomplishments and so flawless his public image, little notice was taken of the traumas that marked his private life. Not until 13 June 1994, that is.

Born on 9 July 1947 in the working-class Portero Hill section of San Francisco, Orenthal James Simpson had a difficult childhood. His parents split

when he was tiny and by his teens he was running with a local gang called the "Persian Warriors". Because of a calcium deficiency, he was forced to wear leg braces. His nickname then was not the "Juice", but "Pencil Pimp".

At the University of South California, Mr Simpson became the first college football player to make it to the cover of *Time* magazine. At 15 stone and 6ft 1in, he was snapped up by the Buffalo Bills where, as a running back, he won the affection of all of America with his astonishing power and ability to dodge tackles. For black Americans especially he became a new kind of sporting role model.

And Mr Simpson, with his good looks, ready smile and effusive sense of humour, seemed impossibly nice. He was the one who would visit kids in hospital or step out to shake hands in the crowd.

After his retirement, he acted in *Online* starring with the *Baywatch* cast in 1974 and including three *Naked Gun* comedies. After his retirement from the field in 1984, he became an NBC sportscaster.

His personal life was less smooth, however. In 1979 he was divorced from Marguerite, who complained that she had been "shoved out of the way" by her husband's new-found fame. Shortly before the divorce was completed, tragedy struck the couple when their 23-month-old daughter, Aaren, died after drowning in a swimming pool.

Mr Simpson began dating Nicole Simpson in 1977, when she was still a schoolgirl, and lavished her with a luxurious lifestyle. They married in 1985 and had two children, Sydney and Justin.



Uncertain future: OJ may be free but he is unlikely to shake the case that has transfixed and polarised the United States. Photograph: Reuters

Silence, a sharp intake of breath and disbelief

"YEEES!" "It's a joke!" simultaneously burst out.

For 20 minutes, 16 men and two women had crouched over a tiny black-and-white television at the French Quarter Diner on Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles. Piped music was cut, coffee got cold and tills were abandoned as everyone waited for the OJ Simpson verdict.

"Sssh" greeted every footstep as Judge Lance Ito's face came up on screen. "Oh my God, I'm so confused," Beth Dara, 34, said. "I know what I think, but I don't know what they'll say."

"Shut it," hissed her neighbour. "Say something, say something," pleaded Jack Adrian as the jury forewoman checked the verdict. Suddenly the silence was broken as a vacuum cleaner started up next door. The diners turned as one to bellow "Shut up!"

Then the verdict was announced and everyone drew sharp breaths, disbelief on many faces. "It's sick. Money talks. Doesn't it?" Dennis Chavez, 36, said. "When you think of the American money that has been spent on this trial when LA has such problems with homelessness and disease."

"But the jury were right," said Freddie Salazar. "There's been so much hype, but they saw through it."

Roy Kinney, a server at the

Glenda Cooper joins the throngs who gathered by the TV in America

diner, disagreed. "The jury think he is guilty but just can't find enough proof. That's why they wouldn't meet his eyes on Monday. And calling up Allan Park's testimony – that was meant to tell him they knew."

Mr Salazar turned away from the set and what had been predicted as "the most viewed event in daytime television history". He shrugged: "It doesn't really affect my life, though, and I think it's been taken way too seriously. Yes, waiting for the verdict has been exciting, but at the end of the day it's just the trial of one man."

"No, it's more than that," Mr Kinney said. "The lawyers turned it into a matter of race. They took the focus off whether he was guilty or innocent and turned it into whether you felt the police were racist or not."

Jeremiah Walker, a taxi driver, agreed. "This trial has all been a load of crap, hasn't it? It's been twisted from the beginning. I just hope [the police] are watching."

Then the piped music came back on, and Mr Kinney asked: "So who did kill Nicole and Ron, then?"

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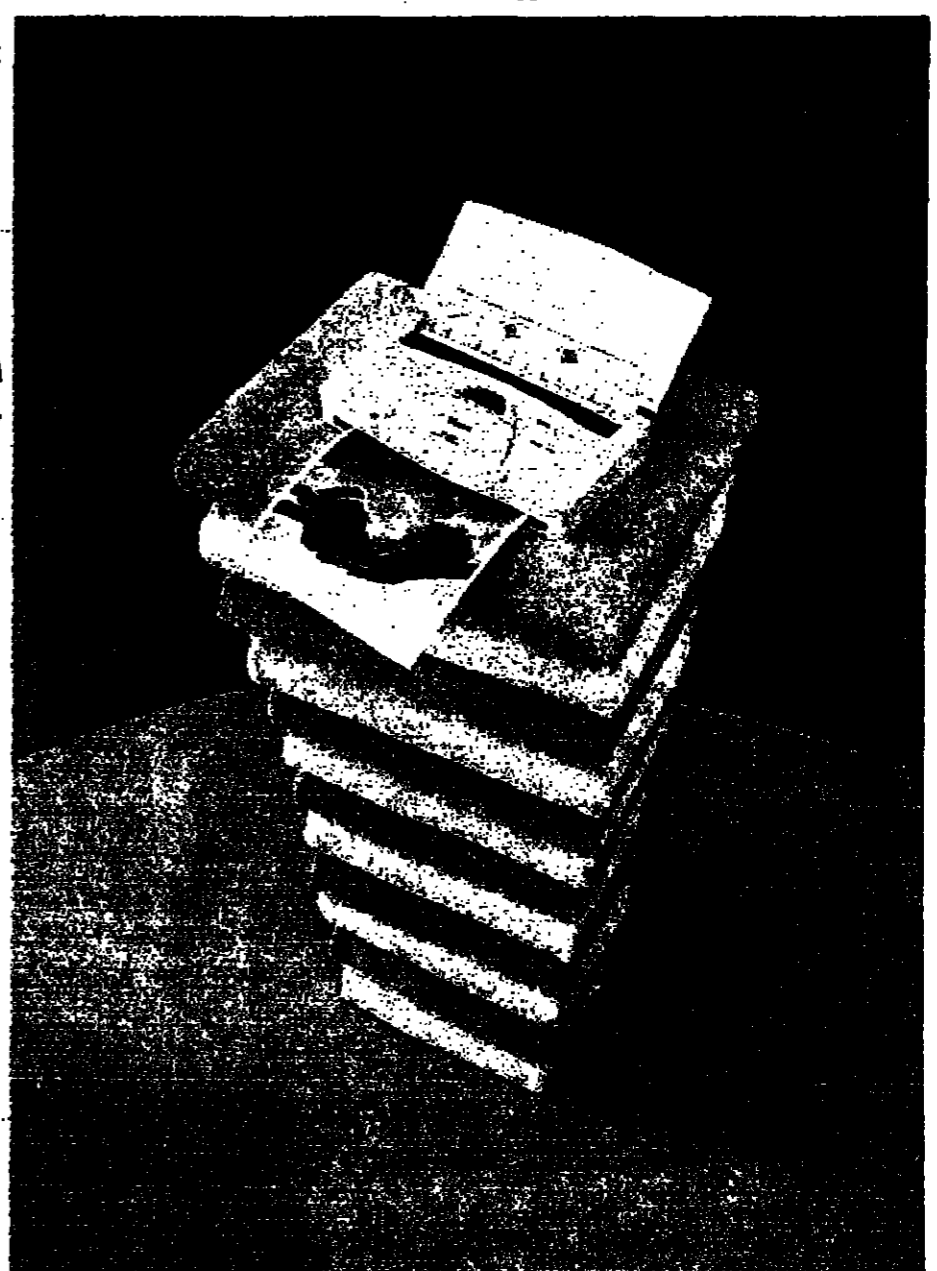
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news

Police urged to get tough on beggars

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Police and voluntary workers are to be urged to get tough with vagrants, drunks and beggars, in an attempt to clean up the streets.

The Government is reviewing vagrancy and other laws to see if police have sufficient powers to deal with aggressive beggars. At the same time it is planning to set targets for hostels and out-reach workers to get long-term and needy homeless into accommodation and treatment centres.

The proposals come just a month after Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, ran into controversy when he said there should be more effort to clear the streets of aggressive car-washers, graffiti artists, beggars, drunks and drug addicts.

They were spelled out in the 70-page consultation document yesterday, which said: "Those

who intimidate others or who attempt fraudulently to procure charitable contributions must expect to be prosecuted. Begging is distressing for members of the public and visitors alike."

The moves form part of a planned extension to the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative - a widely acclaimed homelessness programme that has succeeded in reducing the numbers sleeping on London's streets from more than 1,000 six years ago to about 270 now.

But while continued funding for the programme was yesterday welcomed by welfare groups and charities, there were concerns about the proposal to "get tough" with those who are determined to remain on the streets.

The Government paper reveals that as many as half of them are heavy drinkers, around one-third mentally ill and one in six on drugs.

Yesterday Sarah Moseley, a spokeswoman for Centrepole,

the charity for homeless young people, said: "The success of the scheme has depended upon close co-operation between police, the voluntary agencies and the homeless themselves. To suddenly start forcing people off the streets and into accommodation will only be counter-productive."

However, the paper makes it clear that ministers do not believe that resorting to the criminal law offers a long term solution to the problem and that it would only form one part of a "multi-agency campaign" to solve the homeless problem.

It invites views on more effective outreach and resettlement work and the provision of "wet" shelters - hostels where alcohol can be drunk, an incentive to get those with drink problems off the streets.

The paper also requests information and views from local authorities and others outside central London to see if its success can be extended.



Food for thought: Begging such as this in Leicester Square, central London, may be outlawed by new legislation

Photograph: Geraint Lewis

MPs' conduct: Fresh revelations from Parliamentary insiders

Party whips 'manipulated by lobbyists'

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

MPs and lobbyists yesterday concurred with a description of tactics used by lobbyists to influence the Commons committees that consider legislation, revealed in the *Independent*.

Stephen Byers MP, a Labour whip, said the system was vulnerable because in deciding who to put on standing committees which amend proposed legislation, whips looked at who had spoken on a Bill's second reading. An MP's chances of being selected for the committee, "increase by a factor of 10", said Mr Byers, if he or she had shown an interest in the Bill by speaking on the floor of the House.

At a private conference on Monday, Michael Burrell, managing director of Westminster Strategy, Britain's largest lobbying consultancy, guided members of his profession and executives from major companies and organisations through tactics which can be used.

These included, Mr Burrell said, ensuring friendly MPs disguise their support of a client's position during the second reading of a Bill in the Commons. Speaking at that stage brings MPs to the attention of the whips, who select them for the committee. Once selected, they were more able to support the client's interests. Mr Burrell acknowledged this was a "Machiavellian" practice.

Insiders did not doubt this occurred. Typically, said a senior lobbyist who is also a Tory activist, the whips will be faced with six committee seats to fill from their party. "They will choose four who are straight up

and down behind the party line and will do what they are told, one whose mind is in another direction and another in the opposite direction."

The whips are not averse to Machiavellian behaviour themselves. On the Government side, said the Tory lobbyist, they "will want people on the committee to raise peripheral subjects to mask the real issues, so they will make sure they choose one or two people guaranteed to put up a smoke-screen."

Mr Byers said that from his own experience he knew lobbyists concentrated on standing committees - even before their composition had been decided. When he spoke against the recent Gas Bill - not for any particular lobbying interest but because he had a research station in his constituency which was threatened and he feared low users might end up paying higher tariffs - he was surprised to find how he was approached by political lobbyists and also by the independent gas suppliers themselves on the basis that he would be selected for the standing committee.

A lobbyist from another firm said getting a supporter on to a standing committee was easier than many people might imagine because MPs were not always keen to serve on them and places can go begging.

On a Bill affecting its clients, his firm would encourage its MP contacts to speak. He did not draw the line at getting them to say one thing and then say another once in the committee room - the prize of a voice on the committee, he said, easily justified such a ruse.

Letters, page 18

Talking shelves are cool for cats

JONATHAN FOSTER

Supermarket shelves will this month begin speaking to shoppers through new marketing technology expected to send cat food sales through the roof, and those of a delicate disposition barking mad.

Any hapless trolley-pusher straying close to a Spillers product will hear voices from stacks of inanimate cans. Psychiatrists may later doubt the accounts, but victims from Peterhead to Newquay will swear they distinctly heard the shelf say: "Indulge your loved one with a can of new Spillers Purrfect. But remember, it's just for cats."

The marketing campaign, to be introduced at 60 Sainsbury supermarkets, will not provide jobs for unemployed actors. Instead, pioneering Belgian technology equipped a small box which begins broadcasting the message from behind an illustration of a replete pet.

Spillers decided it was time for cat food tins to break their silence after an outbreak of anthropomorphic thinking seized its marketing department.

The rationale for the new range is simple: human eating habits are changing, explained Richard Hodgson, senior brand manager. People eat fewer traditional "heavy" meals, more

light, spicy meals. Consumption of red meats is decreasing as late 20th century man turns to white meats and fish. Therefore, cat food should reflect those changes in eating habits.

The logic is compelling: next, pine kernel and aubergine roast for the dog, and pasta with fresh basil for the goldfish.

The Purrfect range is being promoted through television advertisements in which a man mistakes the cat's dinner for his own. Recipes include salmon in prawn jelly or chicken in a savoury sauce, available at 49p for a 400g can from the talking supermarket.

Belgian shoppers have already proved obedient to "vox box" promotions. Yoghurt and hair care shelves regularly address monologues to customers. Over on toilet rolls, the Andrex puppy yaps in French and Flemish: "Why don't you take me home this weekend?"

Why the weekend is the time when Belgians are more inclined to use toilet paper remains a mystery, but Belgian bottoms were subsequently treated to 300 per cent more Andrex tissue.

British manufacturers can hardly wait to participate in the retailing bonanza. Jon Cooper, of Instore Marketing, said he had been inundated with inquiries.

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Gloucester killings: Trial of builder's widow begins nine months after he committed suicide in his prison cell

Media frenzy as Rosemary West faces murder jury

WILL BENNETT

The trial of Rosemary West on 10 murder charges began in Winchester yesterday amid huge media interest but with the people of the ancient Hampshire city taking all the fuss in their stride.

The prosecution will not open its case against Mrs West, 41, until at least Friday and possibly

next week because of legal submissions being made to Mr Justice Mantell, the trial judge.

Dozens of photographers and television camera crew were outside Winchester Crown Court yesterday as Mrs West arrived in a police van escorted by three motorcycle outriders after a two-minute journey from the city's prison. She is being held in the prison in a special

unit made from seven cells in the segregation wing. She will be allowed to have visits from her family and lawyers during the trial.

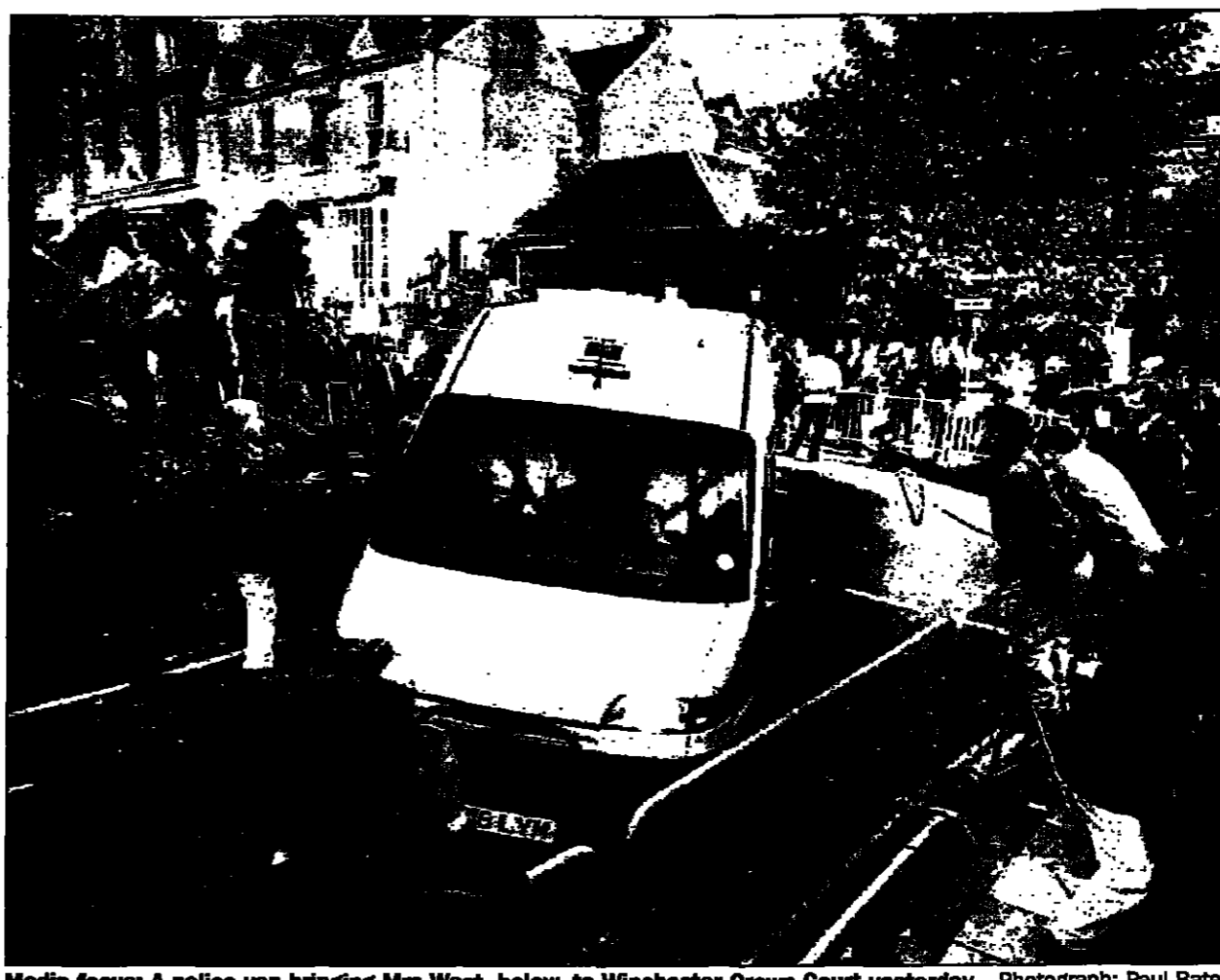
A jury of eight men and four women was sworn in in the bland, modern surroundings of court three, where the trial, which is expected to last up to eight weeks, is taking place.

Mrs West, of Gloucester, stood with her hands clasped in front of her as the jury was told that she was pleading not guilty to 10 charges of murder, alleged to have been committed between 1971 and 1987.

The first charge read out by Angela Merridale, the court clerk, was that she had murdered Charmaine West, eight, the daughter of her husband's first wife, Rena, and the last alleged that she had murdered her own eldest daughter Heather West, 16, who was last seen alive in 1987.

Standing between two female prison warders, Mrs West, a mother of seven, did not speak a word. She looked straight ahead and glanced occasionally at the members of the jury.

Mrs West has faced the charges alone since her husband, Frederick West, a builder, hanged himself in his prison cell in Birmingham last New Year's Day.



Media focus: A police van bringing Mrs West, below, to Winchester Crown Court yesterday. Photograph: Paul Bates

The charges against Rosemary West

Mrs West, 41, is charged with 10 murders. She is alleged to have murdered:

- Charmaine West, eight, between 1971 and 1987.
- Lynda Gough, 19, between 1971 and 1987.
- Carol Ann Cooper, 15, between 1971 and 1987.
- Lucy Partington, 21, between 1971 and 1987.
- Theresa Sleggs, 21, between 1971 and 1987.
- Shirley Hubbard, 15, between 1971 and 1987.
- Juanita Mott, 18, between 1971 and 1987.
- Shirley Anne Robinson, 18, between 1971 and 1987.
- Allison Chambers, 19, between 1971 and 1987.
- Heather West, 16, first and only daughter of Frederick West, between 1971 and 1987.

Murder case told of 'chilling abuse'

A mother murdered her daughter, poisoned another and seriously injured a third in "a chilling catalogue of child abuse", Nottingham Crown Court was told yesterday.

Celia Beckett, 34, of Newark, Nottinghamshire, is accused of killing four-year-old daughter Tracy in 1986, causing fatal brain damage to another daughter, Clare, in 1984, when she was five months old, and poisoning a third daughter, Debbie, and causing her cruelty. The jury heard the case represented a catalogue of errors by social services and police.

Beckett denies all the charges and says the children helped themselves to her anti-depressant drugs. The case continues.

Hickson to appeal

Paul Hickson, 48, the Olympic swimming coach jailed for 17 years last week for sex attacks on young girl swimmers, is to appeal against the sentence and may challenge his conviction.

'Archers' star dies

Actress Mollie Harris, for 25 years the voice of Martha Woodford in *The Archers* radio soap opera, died aged 82. She had been suffering from cancer, a BBC spokesman said.

Obituary, page 16

Roller-blade alert

The Westminster coroner called for stricter controls on roller-bladers after the death of a cyclist. A verdict of accidental death was recorded on Mark Welch, 26, of Shepherd's Bush, west London, who collided with a skater in Hyde Park.

Chess solution

Councillors in the Western Isles conceded defeat in the battle for the world's most expensive chess set and agreed to the return of the 800-year-old Lewis Chessmen, valued at £1m each, to the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland.

Sex abuse charge dropped after 'victim' is found hanged

ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

The alleged victim of child abuse involving a Catholic cleric has killed himself, an Irish court has told yesterday.

A charge of sex abuse against Joseph Scally, 60, based at the headquarters of the De la Salle order at Castletown in Port Lais, in the Irish Republic was dropped at Newtownards magistrates' court in Co Down,

Northern Ireland after the court heard the alleged victim had hanged himself 10 days ago.

Mr Scally, who worked at a children's home in the Ards Peninsula in Co Down, faced two new charges. He was accused of buggery of two boys under 16 between January 1971 and May 1979.

He appeared in court earlier this year charged with five similar offences. The charge dropped yesterday concerned a

man now aged 30 who committed suicide. The new charges came as the Irish Director of Public Prosecutions defended his office against claims that prosecution rates in sex abuse cases were unjustifiably low.

Meanwhile, at Galway circuit court in the Irish Republic, a 40-year-old priest was charged with indecent assault against a teenage boy on 15 occasions between March 1988 and February 1989. The priest's solicitor

requested the trial be moved to Dublin. The application was not opposed by the State Solicitor. The accused cannot be named for legal reasons.

In a rare public statement yesterday, Eamonn Barnes, the Irish Republic's Director of Public Prosecutions, rejected

politicians' claims of an extraordinarily low rate of prosecution of such offences, and a reluctance to bring charges in cases involving children under

the age of seven. Mr Barnes complained of an "absurd duplication" of legal functions between his agency - in which he and 10 legal assistants process 8,000 legal cases annually - and the State Solicitors, who take over cases at the prosecution stage in Ireland.

He said the division meant "I have, in short, little or no control over the implementation of my decisions", and argued that a single legal agency should

oversee cases from start to finish, reducing delays and costs. He added that while a social worker might believe sex abuse had occurred, other key considerations included whether a child was old enough to give evidence, and the time-lapse between an alleged offence and a case being brought.

Denying slowness in initiating prosecutions, he told Irish radio: "We are in the business of implementing the criminal

law. That is particularly true in the horrible crime of sex abuse. Anyone with a grain of humanity in them would give a little bit extra effort in the prosecution of those crimes."

Mr Barnes warned: "You must always remember justice is even-handed. You must always have regard for the interests not alone of the victim, and the interests of the victim are critically important, but also of the suspect."

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For a cricket lover:

The Village Cricket Tour will give hours of pleasure. A novel which describes the adventures and mishaps of a team of amateur cricketers who spend two weeks of their summer holidays on a cricket tour of the West Country and which has been compared to Jerome K. Jerome's classic 'Three Men in a Boat'. "I enjoyed it immensely" wrote Peter Tinniswood in Punch. "He has succeeded in writing a book that will amuse and warm the cockles of tired hearts." "Coleman is a very funny writer," said This England. "It would be a pity if cricketers were the only people to read this book." "Seminal reading includes De Selincourt and Blunden and should now embrace Vernon Coleman's latest offering, a whimsical piece about the peregrinations of a village cricket team on its summer tour," said The Cricketer magazine. "All the characters are here, woven together by a raft of anecdotes and reminiscences and a travelogue of some of the most picturesque spots in the south west." A marvellous present for all cricket lovers.

For a golf lover:

Anyone who likes golf will love The Man Who Inherited a Golf Course. This superb novel tells the story of Trevor Dukinfield who wakes up one morning to find that he is the owner of his very own golf club - fairways, bunkers, clubhouse and all. There's one snag: to keep the club he must win a golf match. And he's never played a round of golf in his life. "The scenario is tailor made for Vernon Coleman's light and amusing anecdotes about country life and pursuits" said the Sunday Independent. "Very readable!" said Golf World. "Hugely enjoyable in the best tradition of British comic writing" said the Evening Chronicle. "The mix of anecdotes and moments of sheer farce make for an absorbing read" said the Telegraph. A terrific present for anyone who enjoys golf. Far more fun than another pair of socks or a bottle of aftershave.

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Mortgage repayment benefit will still be available after October 1st to those changing the type of mortgage held with the same lender. All offers subject to security and status. Full details of the free transfer offer are available on request. It does not apply to properties in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. A charge will be taken over the property and appropriate life policy(ies). For written details of Midland's mortgages call 0800 494 999. At 4/3 Midland Bank plc is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and advises only on its own life assurance, pensions and unit trusts. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT



If you lost your job, how would you pay your mortgage?

You may be unaware of the changes to the rules governing income support. But you ought to know about them, because they may affect you. After October 1st, if you have a mortgage you will receive no assistance with your interest payments in the first two months of illness or unemployment, followed by reduced rates of assistance for the next four months. And if you're taking out a new mortgage or changing an existing mortgage, you'll receive no help for the first nine months. If you take out a mortgage with Midland, however,

we'll offer you Mortgage Repayment Protection. This will pay your mortgage interest for twelve months during illness, after an accident or if you lose your job. And if you switch your mortgage to Midland you'll be happy to hear that on top of a free transfer and special mortgage rate discounts, we're offering the first six months' protection free. For more information on transferring your mortgage to Midland, return the coupon, visit your local branch or call us free on 0800 494 999.

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Another world's fastest chip H-P claims its PA-8000 will outperform others

It's a title that seems to shift on a monthly basis, but Hewlett-Packard Co. shipped a chip design Monday that it says deserves the title of the world's fastest microprocessor.

Shortages hit 486 suppliers

A worldwide shortage of 486 chips is starting to make life difficult for system vendors as Intel shifts semiconductor production in favor of Pentium.

HP lifts curtain on 64-bit chip, keeps mum on Intel project

Determined not to lose mind share in the processor game, Hewlett-Packard Co. last week provided a glimpse of its 64-bit PA-RISC 8000 architecture, which is still a year from delivery.

At the same time, officials at HP and Intel Corp. all but denied a wire service news report that said the results of the two companies' collaborative processor development would be announced in 1997.

IN TUNE WITH
In showing that the 64-bit UltraSPARC is better than 64-bit Sparc, Larry Inman, HP, don't see the value

IBM, Motorola show off PowerPC 620 prototype; volume shipment expected in '95

IBM and Motorola are announcing the PowerPC 620 this week, the most advanced implementation of the PowerPC architecture to date.

As part of the announcement, the two companies introduced the first 620 prototype, with sample shipments to follow in the second quarter of 1995.

IBM, Motorola To Announce 64-bit PowerPC

64-bit PowerPC, which IBM and Motorola will announce this week, promises improvements in multiprocessing over the 601.

to come twice 604's of The other apart

1997 date set for delivery of HP/Intel P7

Intel Corp. acknowledged last week that the P7 will be the first chip to come out of the alliance.

per second (see "Pentium now, VLIW later," Jan. 30, page 1). The basic concept of the VLIW is to have a

IBM accelerates revamp of OS/400; PowerPC version due later this year

As IBM ships the last of its promoted OS/400 Release 2.1 components this week, it's planning the way for delivery of a completely redesigned PowerPC-based OS/400.

IBM's new server platforms. The stakes are high. IBM shipped its installed base of 300,000 AS/400s at the end of 1994, with sales growing by 50,000 units per year.

IBM big iron revamps code well for 95; Client/server OS, 64-bit architecture await AS/400

IBM has spent the past few years trying to answer questions about the use in a client/server world. It will start to find out whether it's got it right.

IBM accelerates PowerPC commitment

IBM's new server platforms. The stakes are high. IBM shipped its installed base of 300,000 AS/400s at the end of 1994, with sales growing by 50,000 units per year.

HP set to launch PA-8000 chip; systems not expected until 1996

Sun announces untested 64-bit chip

PowerPC: Much hype, little demand

PC World's first PowerPC-based system, IBM, Apple Computer and Motorola have announced they are hyping the PowerPC architecture. But in private, officials from the troika of processors don't seem ready to jump on the bandwagon.

INTEL-HEWLETT-PACKARD ALLIANCE SEEN RALLYING A 64-BIT MICROPROCESSOR STANDARDS EFFORT

There are scant details of how Hewlett-Packard Co. plans to introduce technology developed under its

IT'S NICE TO SEE IBM AND HP FIGHTING OVER WHO WILL BE NUMBER 2.

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business grows. Sure, it's possible that HP or IBM really will have 64-bit

machines, eventually. But even when they start offering real-world 64-bit

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IBM's 100,000th PowerPC System

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Fans cry foul as United cash in

TOM STEVENSON
and JOHN MCKIE

Manchester United fans, already upset by the transfers over the summer of some of their star players, were dealt another blow yesterday when the club unveiled soaring revenue from its widely criticised merchandising operation.

United recorded sales of £23.5m from kit, videos and other gear emblazoned with their colours in the year to July, up from £14.2m in 1994. Five years ago the club sold just £2m from merchandising. The increased revenue from these sales helped the publicly quoted company that owns the club to double its profits from £10.8m last year to £20m.

Football clubs have come under fire for the money they make selling team strips, which change every couple of years. Critics say clubs prey on fashion-conscious children and their hapless parents. Manchester United have three different designs to tempt youngsters, covering home and away matches.

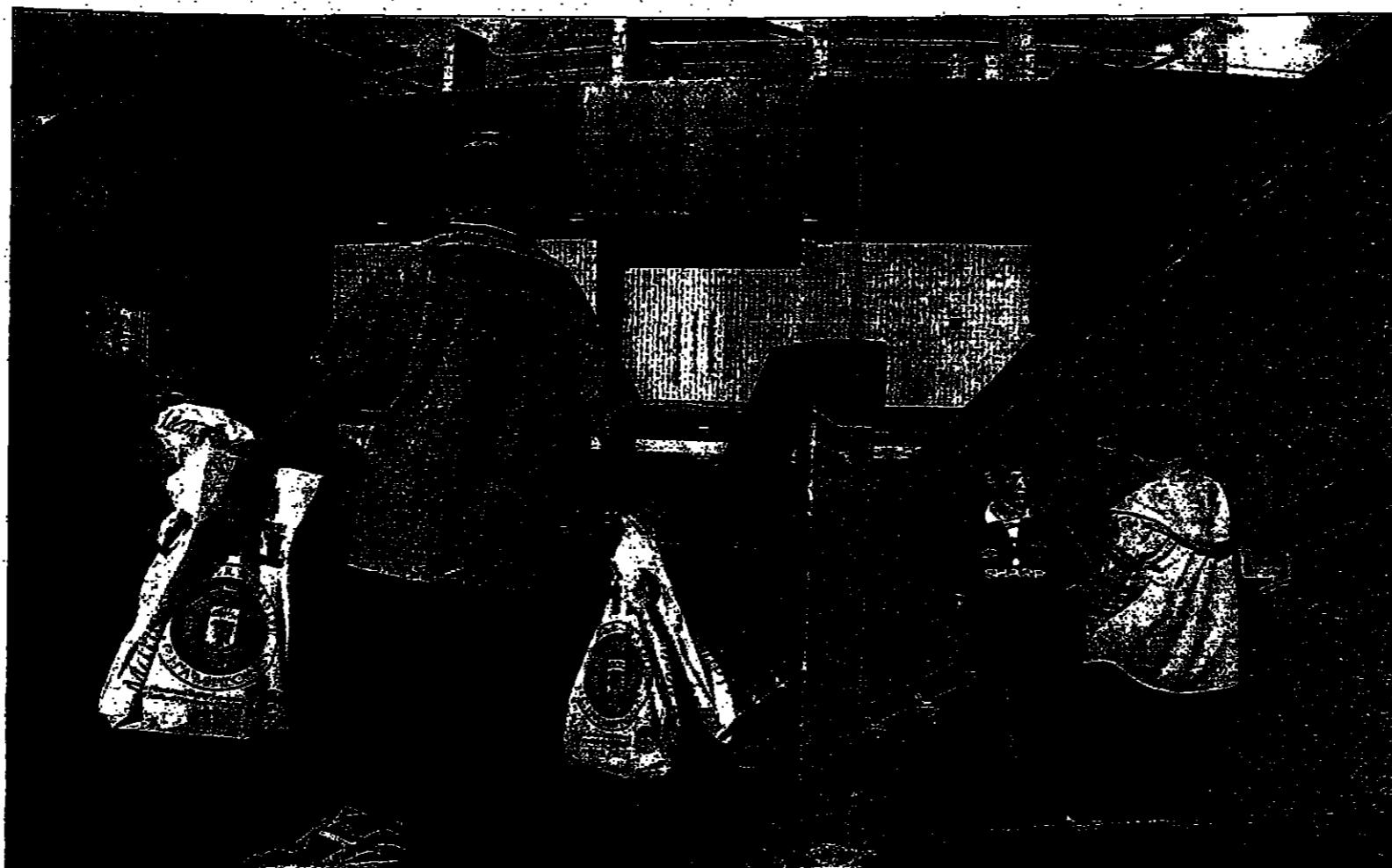
This summer saw a 13 per cent increase in ticket prices and the sale of three of the club's stars. Mark Hughes, Paul Ince and Andrei Kanchelskis.

Andy Walsh, secretary of the Independent Manchester United Supporters' Association, said yesterday: "It's a scandal. They promised us there was going to be a freeze on prices for two years. They're pricing the ordinary fan out the market. Last year, to follow them home and away, cost £3,000. To take my son to two home games and an away game in Sheffield cost more than £100."

The association's vice-chairman, Johnny Flacks, added: "In the past five years, there's been a 300 per cent increase in prices. Manchester United used to pride themselves on being one of the cheapest clubs in the country but now they're one of the most expensive outside London."

The growth in profits came despite a traumatic 1994-95 season for the club in which it failed to win a major competition, finishing as runner-up in both the Premiership and FA Cup.

All clubs now supplement



Strip search: Young fans stock up with new season merchandising and, below, some of the recent kit

Photograph: Howard Barlow



gate receipts with advertising and merchandising activities. None, however, makes as much as Manchester United.

Martin Edwards, chief executive, defended the soaring revenues yesterday, pointing out that the biggest-selling shirt size last year had been extra large. Football kit was anyway extremely hard-wearing and so

good value, he suggested, and he defended the decision to produce the variety of kit. He said the club was adopting an "energetic" merchandising approach. "We have three kits in progression, a first, a second and a third strip and they all have a two-year cycle, and so there's a new kit each year."

Mr Edwards attempted to reassure fans: "We won't be having a new kit for the rest of this season."

Merchandising overtook gate receipts and programme sales last year as Manchester United's biggest revenue earner and it now represents almost 40 per cent of the club's sales.

Following United's double-winning run in the 1993-94 season, gate receipts also increased, up a tenth to £19.6m. Turnstile takings were boosted by an inflation-beating 13 per cent ticket price rise which had been repeated this season.

Mr Edwards said the planned increase of Old Trafford's capacity to 55,000 by the end of the season, up from 44,000, might mean a slowdown in ticket

price increases. The North stand at United's ground is currently being rebuilt at a cost of £19m. Elsewhere, increased revenues from television fees, sponsorship and royalties and conference and catering income, combined with a jump in net transfer fees, helped double the profits.

Investment column, page 22

Army suffering from shortage of front-line troops

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The Army is facing a serious shortage of front-line soldiers in spite of the multi-million pound recruiting campaign which began a year ago, and despite reductions in its overall size and the "Front Line First" review intended to shift more soldiers to combat units.

The infantry, which should have 24,000 soldiers, is 1,200-5 per cent - under strength and the 2,000-strong Parachute Regiment more than 10 per cent.

The Royal Armoured Corps, who drive tanks, and the Royal Artillery, who fire big guns, the other principal "teeth arms", are also short of soldiers in the ranks. But the Engineers, Signals, Logistics Corps and other technical arms are over-recruited. And the next three courses for officer cadets, destined for command appointments in all parts of the Army, at Sandhurst are all full.

Senior officers believe the shortage of recruits in the key fighting arms is due to the higher entry qualifications now required, and the fact that people with the necessary abilities favour branches of the Army that will give them technical qualifications they can use when

they leave the service. In addition to social changes, they also blame parents who pressurise their sons and daughters not to join units that are perceived to be more dangerous.

Next year, the Army is due to reduce to 117,000 troops, and its actual strength is expected to be 1,000 short overall. It could force soldiers who signed up for the support arms to serve in the infantry, tanks or artillery, but is most reluctant to do so.

The shortage is particularly serious because 32 per cent of the Army is currently on active service - in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, or Cyprus - training for them, or resting afterwards.

The Army is having to meet this unprecedented operational commitment on a "peacetime" basis - without any of the reservists who would reinforce it in "war". So it has had to bolster units in Bosnia with soldiers from other regiments.

A senior Army officer said changes in education and social organisation were partly responsible for the imbalance.

He added: "We don't need the 'grunt' infantryman any more. We're looking at the person who is happy in the field, with all the night vision equipment, laser rangefinders, and the rest."

IRA prisoners fight 'unlawful' visit rules

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, was yesterday accused at the High Court of unlawfully denying IRA prisoners the right to proper contact with their families and lawyers - the third time in a week government treatment of IRA terrorists has come under court scrutiny, writes Heather Mills.

Following the attempted IRA breakout from Whittemoor top security jail in Cambridgeshire last September, the Prison Service introduced "closed visits" - prisoners divided from visitors by a glass screen - for all inmates

seen as an "exceptional risk".

Yesterday two IRA prisoners, Michael O'Brien, serving 18 years for attempted murder, and Liam O'Duibhir, jailed for 30 years for conspiracy to cause explosions, claimed the moves breached their rights to unfettered access to a lawyer. Edward Fitzgerald QC, for the two men, further argued that the right to some form of physical contact with close family was the "irreducible minimum" any civilised society should provide.

The Government is contesting the judicial review.

You close your laptop. You push back your seat and adjust your footrest. A taste of Brie. A sip of Bordeaux.

You turn the sound up a notch and hope you won't be arriving too soon.

LABOUR IN BRIGHTON

Blair offers vision of a new young Britain

'We are the patriotic party of the people'

STEPHEN GOODWIN
Parliamentary Correspondent

Tony Blair yesterday portrayed Labour as the "patriotic party", wanting to build a united Britain, where politics is not fought by appealing to one section of the nation at the expense of another.

In a speech of just over an hour, very well received by the Brighton conference, the Labour leader said he would devote to creating the country of the post-war generation's dreams.

He wanted to build a "new and young country" that lay aside the old prejudices. "One Britain... where your child in distress is my child, your parent ill and in pain is my parent, your friend unemployed and helpless is my friend, your neighbour my neighbour. That is the true patriotism of a nation."

Declaring Labour to be the patriotic party because it was the party of the people, Mr Blair said he knew what many people would be thinking as the Tories waved their Union Flags next week in Blackpool: "It is no good waving the flag of our flag when you have spent 16 years tearing apart the fabric of our nation."

He never mentioned John Major by name and questioned the survival of the NHS and free state education if the Tories were returned for a fifth term. The Liberal Democrats did not feature at all, but he said Labour would co-operate with others on constitutional change. There would be legislation in the first year for a Scottish parliament and a Welsh assembly. London should have a directly-elected authority and the right of hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords would be ended as the first step to reform of the second chamber.

Telling unions to "leave the battles of the past", Mr Blair said laws on ballots, peaceful picketing and the conduct of disputes would stay. But he reaffirmed Labour's commitment to sign the European Social Charter on workers' rights and drew loud applause for his opposition to rail privatisation.

"To anyone thinking of grabbing our railways, built up over the years, so they can make a quick profit as our network is broken up and sold off, I say this: There will be a publicly-owned, and publicly accountable railway system under a Labour government."

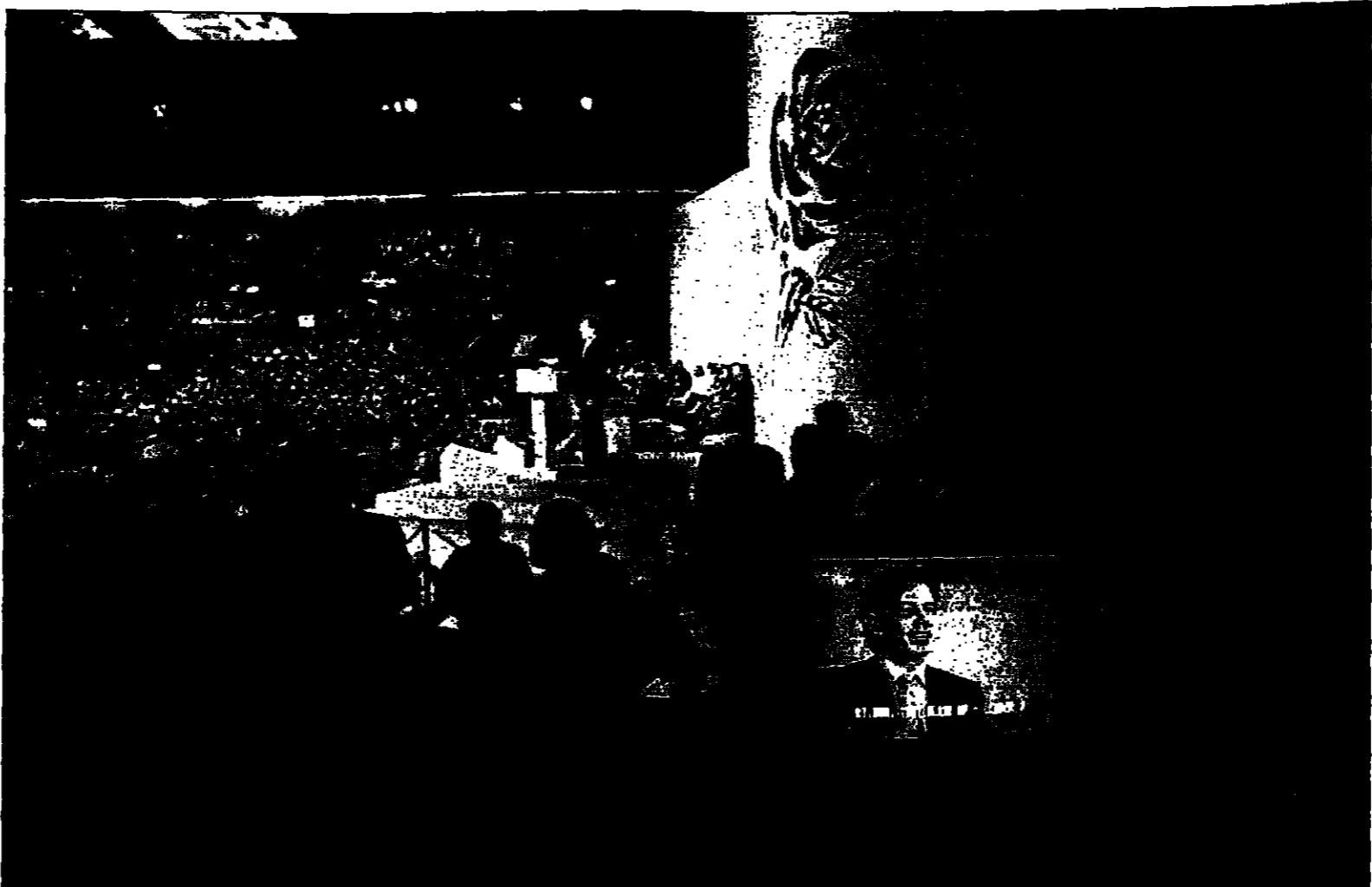
Acknowledging that the transition to "new Labour" had been painful for some, Mr Blair said that socialism to him was never about nationalisation or the power of the state. It was a moral purpose in life.

"It is how I try to live my life. The simple truths. I am worth no more than anyone else. I am my brother's keeper. I will not walk by on the other side." People were not set in isolation from each other but members of the same family, the same community.

"This is my socialism. And the irony of our long years in opposition is that those values are shared by the vast majority of the British people."

Mr Blair said he did not enter politics to change the Labour Party but to change his country. "And I honestly believe that if we hadn't changed, if we had not returned our party to its values, freed from the weight of outdated ideology, we could not change the country."

"For I do not want a one-term Labour government that dazzles for a moment then ends in disillusion. I want a Labour government that governs for a generation and changes Britain for good."



Party platform: Tony Blair, the Labour leader, addresses the conference in Brighton yesterday

Photograph: John Voos

Setting the background to his call for a "young Britain", Mr Blair said his generation had been born into the welfare state and the market economy of bank accounts, supermarkets, jeans and cars. They had money in their pockets, had travelled abroad and had been through the sexual revolution of the 1960s.

"This generation, my generation, enjoys a thousand material advantages over any previous generation; and yet we suffer a depth of insecurity and spiritual doubt they never

knew." The family was weakened, society divided. "We see elderly people in fear of crime, children abused."

In a key section, he stressed the importance of education as the best economic policy. The future lay in the marriage of education and technology, he said. "We will never compete on the basis of a low wage, sweat shop economy." Knowledge was power, information was opportunity, and technology could make it happen.

He announced to the conference that BT had agreed that

in return for full access to the cable entertainment market - denied them by the Government - the company would connect up every college, hospital and library in Britain for free as it built the cable network.

"They get the chance to win new markets. The nation gets the chance to succeed. That is what I mean by new Labour, that kind of co-operation."

He said David Blunkett, the party's education spokesman, would be opening discussions with education authorities and computer companies towards

the goal of ensuring that every child had access to a laptop computer.

Avoiding the contentious words "grant-maintained schools", he said there would be no more dogma in education and no more arguments about structures. "For every school, fair and equal funding. No return to selection, academic or social."

Labour would be the champion of standards for the 21st century. There would be a nursery place for every three and four year old and class sizes of

less than 30 for every five, six and seven year old.

Mr Blair said no-one pretended Labour could solve unemployment overnight, but no decent society could tolerate the present level of long-term unemployment with all the misery and social breakdown it brought.

"So we will take the excess profits of the new robber barons of Tory Britain in the privatised utilities, and use it for the most radical programme of work and education for the unemployed every put forward in Britain."

Quotes

Austin Mitchell MP: "It was like a revivalist sermon. Well done, a very moralistic performance."

Audrey Wise, left-wing MP: "It is a speech I will keep by me as a reference point. It implied a very large commitment."

Brian Mawhinney, Tory Party chairman: "This was a recycled speech from a leader who admitted that his party is no more than a recycled version of Labour in 1945 and 1964."

Hannah Wood, of Lewisham south-east London, 22, dismissed the promise of proper access to a laptop computer. "Proper access to a decent diet is a higher priority."

Alan Johnson, joint general secretary, Communication Workers Union: "It was the most inspirational political speech for a generation."

A member of the National Executive Committee said: "Tony has said he loves the party. That is the new thing in this speech."

Jeremy Corbyn, left-wing MP: "A deal with BT is not the same as taking privatised industries back into public ownership."

Rodney Bickerstaffe, leader of the public service union Unison: "He was very strong on patriotism and I am delighted he mentioned his commitment to a minimum wage."

Garry Meyer of Hove, East Sussex, 31, said: "I am not disappointed, but what he should be doing is trying to force a general election by campaigning on some issues like a fixed figure on a minimum wage."

Jerry Hayes, Conservative MP for Harlow: "It was a masterly exercise in virtual reality with the rallying cry that every child should have access to a laptop computer."

Media diversion from star's crowd control

BT agrees on-line deal

It was like a rerun of that old Vick's Synex advert featuring Malcolm and his blocked nose. At 6pm yesterday, everywhere in the Brighton conference centre people were tearing off in search of televisions, asking the question of anyone they passed: "What's the verdict?"

"Blair's speech? Brilliant."

"No, silly, the OJ trial."

It was going to take a seismic event to keep Tony Blair's efforts from dominating the front pages. And from the land of the earthquake it came: the Simpson acquittal was set to juice all opposition for the headlines.

The question Labour delegates - never slow at sniffing a conspiracy theory - wanted answered was: never mind how much OJ had slipped the jury,



JIM WHITE

how much had Tory central office given Judge Ito to time the verdict so inconveniently for Mr Blair?

Not that he did not try valiantly in the face of the opposition. Earlier in the day, Brian Wilson MP had eulogised him from the platform as a leader of such wide-ranging quality, he was even an expert at keepy-woop. As he had

demonstrated with Kevin Keegan on Monday, Blair knows how to control a football; yesterday he showed he is equally adept at controlling an audience.

Shot through with the Blairite mantra - the words "young", "new" and "super-highway" - it was a speech full of firsts. Here was the first time a Labour leader had so vigorously appropriated Tory values (the family, the law, the Union Jack). The first time a Labour leader had triumphed in deals with big business (New Labour: not so much the party of opportunity as the party of BT). And, in his central words "let me tell you about my generation", Mr Blair became the first prospective Prime Minister

to be apparently scripted by Pete Townshend.

Indeed it was not only the words of the speech that reminded you of a pop concert. It had much of the rhythm and pacing too. There was the big start ("last year I was Bambi, this year I'm Stalin... from Disneyland to dictator in 12 months"); there was the new material slipped, to muted applause, into the middle; and there was the melody of old hits - bringing back the GLC, stopping rail privatisation, condemning French nuclear tests - towards the end.

And then there was the climax, saving the favourite tune till last, the one that goes: bash, bash, bash the Tories. A six-minute ovation it earned him.

first alone, then hand in hand with Cherie, then in a cosy foursome with the Prescotts, then alone again, providing the photographers with a dozen different angles. Snaps which will now, thanks to Judge Ito, be carried on pages eight and nine. So much for the media manipulation of New Labour.

So thwarted were they on their big day yesterday, you imagine that the clever apparitions who surround Mr Blair had already sent a delegation spinning down the not-so-super, highway to Winchester to persuade the Judge in the Rosemary West case to save a particularly gruesome bit of evidence for next Thursday. About the time John Major is getting to his feet in Blackpool.

JACK O'SULLIVAN
and MATTHEW HORSMAN

British Telecom has agreed to wire, free of charge, every school, college, hospital and library in Britain to the information superhighway, Tony Blair told the conference. He said David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, had also opened discussions with computer companies to ensure that every child has access to a laptop computer.

The BT deal, which follows meetings between Mr Blair and Sir Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, would, for example, allow small or rural schools to link up electronically with teachers at a remote location. Medical experts would be able to examine

patients by video link-up. All these institutions would gain access to a vast amount of information. Once the link was installed they would have to pay for services.

In exchange for BT's offer a Labour government would from 2002 allow BT, Mercury and other telecom providers to use their networks to broadcast entertainment services into British homes, in direct competition with cable operators.

This "open market" was already a firmly established part of Labour policy, but had not yet been made the basis of any explicit agreement involving BT. The concession could prove profitable to BT, delivering to them a potential market comprising millions of consumers.

The cable industry downplayed the significance of the deal. A spokesman for the Cable Communications Association said: "There's nothing fundamentally new about what Blair said today. We certainly share his view about the social and economic benefits of the information highway."

He added that the cable industry announced its own plans to wire schools around the country last January, and has since connected "hundreds" of institutions at no cost. Hospitals, universities and local councils have signed up as clients of the cable operators, and are using video-conferencing and other technologies, for instance to develop distance learning and remote medical diagnosis.

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LABOUR IN BRITAIN

as party's hard left clings to old certainties

Tears as Liz Davies's bid for Parliament is quickly crushed

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES and COLIN BROWN

The battle by the left-winger Liz Davies to be accepted as a parliamentary candidate came to a bitter end yesterday after Labour delegates voted by two to one in favour of the party leadership.

In a perfunctory and acrimonious debate, lasting barely 20 minutes, the conference crushed a move to press the national executive to reconsider last week's 17-5 decision to refuse to endorse her as the candidate for Leeds North East.

The only possible avenue of protest open to Ms Davies and the Leeds North East constituency party, which selected her from a women-only shortlist, is the rocky and uncertain territory of court action.

After leaving the hall in tears, Ms Davies, who remains an Islington councillor and party member, said: "I am not a Trotskyist."

"The only reason for refusing to endorse me is my association with *Labour Briefing* [the left-wing journal]. It is not a proscribed magazine. It upholds an old tradition of political satire. This decision is unprecedented."

Moving the reference back of the National Executive Committee's report, Barbara Levy, the Leeds North East constituency delegate, said the affair had produced "some of

the most shameful manoeuvres anyone has seen in this party."

Railing against "sneers and innuendo", she complained that "metropolitan politicians" [on Islington council, where Ms Davies chairs the women's committee] had taken precedence over the democratic rights of her constituency party.

Conference organisers failed to deliver an earlier promise to allow a second Davies supporter to speak.

Heckled with cries of "shame" from left-wingers, an uneasy Clare Short, Labour's women's spokesperson, swiftly wound up the debate by saying the 31-year-old barrister's stated views and track record did not make her a "suitable candidate" at the next election.

Making no apology for what is a "political" veto, rather than one based on breach of party rules or discipline, Ms Short made clear that Ms Davies' previous role as editorial board member of the "nasty, vicious" *Labour Briefing* was the main reason she was excluded.

"Trotskyist entryism" had helped lose Labour the last four elections by creating an atmosphere of " nastiness and division", Ms Short declared.

Breaking off at one point to tell hecklers "this is undemocratic behaviour and it does your case no good", Ms Short said: "We are planning to form the next government - bring

hope, fairness and compassion to our country... we need candidates who understand this and will respect party democracy and help to carry through and explain difficult decisions."

Tony Benn, the MP for Chesterfield, said afterwards: "Liz Davies is the sacrificial lamb being offered to the mass media to establish the idea that the Labour Party is different from what it has always been. It isn't. It is the same Labour Party."

"I would be happy to see Liz Davies the leader of the Labour Party," he added.

A veteran of the left, Mr Benn compared her proscription by the leadership with the expulsion of Nye Bevan and Stafford Cripps from the Labour Party.

"The trade union delegations who voted against Liz Davies are the real embarrassment to new Labour... If Liz had written for the *Sun* instead of *Labour Briefing*, she would have been honoured by a special visit from the leader to Australia."

Her supporters in Leeds North East could face disciplinary action if they defy the NEC's decision by refusing to accept another candidate to fight the seat.

Also, Ms Davies could become a *cause célèbre* against Tony Blair's leadership by the left, which has been increasingly marginalised at the conference.



Old guard: Liz Davies (left) has her hopes of becoming an MP dashed (Photograph: John Voos) as Arthur Scargill (right) talks of quitting party

King Coal dubbed King Canute over Clause IV

Having failed to resurrect the pro-nationalisation Clause IV, Arthur Scargill yesterday indicated that he was considering leaving the Labour Party, writes Barrie Clement.

Asked if he could remain a member, he replied in the Thatcherite first person plural: "We will have to consider our position."

The miners' leader told the BBC: "I joined this party to change society. I didn't join this

party to run capitalism better and more efficiently than the Tories."

Traditionally characterised as King Coal, in the debate over Clause IV yesterday Mr Scargill was accused of being King Canute after he attempted to defend his "birthright" as an "unashamed socialist".

Deserted by former supporters of the party's old testament, the motion presented by the leader of the National

Union of Mineworkers was overwhelmingly defeated. Tony Blair was noticeably absent from the platform, putting the finishing touches to his speech on "New Britain", a country presumably not to Mr Scargill's liking. He argued that the special conference on 29 April, which voted by a two-thirds majority to abandon the clause, had been unconstitutional.

Amid sporadic cheers and occasional catcalls Mr Scargill

warned delegates that without Clause IV's commitment to the "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange", Labour would be no different to the Tories. He told delegates: "If you ditch Clause IV you throw away our birthright and the cornerstone of our constitution which makes us different from the party we are seeking to replace."

He pointed out that unions had created the Labour Party

and the leadership was now guilty of the "theft" of the constitution. Mr Scargill said he had joined the party to fight the "ruthless and corrupt" system of capitalism. "We must have a philosophy which is fundamentally different to those which support the free market."

He received prolonged applause from significant sections of the conference, but many of those delegates then went on to vote against him.

IN BRIEF

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

As Tony Blair unveiled his vision of New Britain, fresh evidence emerged of backstage deals with unions.

In one such accommodation, Mr Blair has agreed not to reduce unions' voting power at policy-making conferences below 50 per cent. In another the leadership has won agreement

from politically independent unions to help the Labour Party at the next general election.

Conservative Central Office officials yesterday said they were considering legal action against such unions because they were not lawfully affiliated to Labour.

As part of the deal over the union block vote, most of the party's biggest affiliates agreed to oppose a motion yesterday

which could have resulted in their share of voting going back up to 70 per cent.

Instead conference agreed to reduce the share from the present 70 per cent to 50 per cent next year. In return, and in conflict with the wishes of Mr Blair, Labour has agreed not to press for further reductions.

Dan Duffy, speaking on behalf of the party's national executive, said the new system

would "settle the matter once and for all". Some senior party sources said the arrangement would last only "for the foreseeable future", although union officials insisted there was no time limit to the deal.

Meanwhile minutes of a private meeting between Tony Blair and senior union officials on 18 September at the House of Commons reveal that unions without constitutional links with

the party are prepared to help Labour in key marginal seats.

Principal among the "unaffiliated" organisations to agree to help are the Whitehall unions which hold funds arguably meant to be spent largely on one-off campaigns with political implications rather than on the support of a single party.

One senior civil service union source conceded yesterday that officials' time would be devoted

to key seats and that Labour candidates would be provided with political ammunition to fire at Conservative candidates.

The Conservative Party has previously taken court action against the old Nalco local government union for taking out full page advertisements with a strong pro-Labour favour. This time however the backing will be less overt and it will be difficult to prove involvement.

NEC gets power to ballot members

The rule changes to give the National Executive Committee the power to carry out referendums of all party members on policy were expected to be carried in votes to be announced this morning, writes John Rentoul. The GMB general union with 12.9 per cent of the vote voted against but most other unions are understood to have supported Tony Blair's move, which comes as part of a package of rules revisions.

Today's Business

Conference will debate transport, including a commitment to a publicly-owned rail network, education, the NHS, community care, housing, the environment, rural policy and animal welfare.

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Pollution fear as Irish cattle deaths mount

International team looks into cow disease and deformity in babies. Alan Murdoch reports

An official inquiry by Irish, British and US scientists is to investigate the cause of widespread cattle deaths and human illnesses affecting up to 20 farms in Co Limerick, western Ireland.

If traced to industry, the problems would rank alongside Ireland's worst toxic pollution incident at Ballymore, Tipperary, in the 1980s when large numbers of cattle were poisoned by industrial emissions.

Attention has centred on three farms around the village of Askeaton. But animal health sources say the number of farms suffering unexplained abnormalities is around 20. Animal deaths linked to immune system failure are reported from as far as Rathkeale, four miles from Askeaton.

Residents in Askeaton and Ballymore are concerned about acid night-time emissions which sometimes force residents to cover mouths and noses when going outside. Ailments have been sufficiently serious for children of two neighbouring farmers to require specialist treatment.

No warning has been issued against people on other farms consuming local milk, though tests by an Irish government laboratory showed above-normal fluorine levels. Contamination of the human food would represent "the nightmare scenario," an Irish Farmers' Association spokesman warned. Medical data is being collected for the inquiry by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). But farmers fear it lacks resources, and want investigations extended to also examine reported birth defects, including foals born without eyes, across the Shannon in Co Clare.

Doctors are also concerned. Dr Mary Grey, of the Irish College of General Practitioners, said known health problems included a "particularly bad deformed birth, the like of which the obstetrician had never seen before". Rumours of an unusual number of women experiencing multiple miscarriages remain unconfirmed. The local TD (MP), Michael

Finucane, criticises long delays in starting comprehensive tests. Citing the Ballymore incident, he says that "the most fundamental lesson is that one cannot sit idly by".

Industrial sites on the southern Shannon shore include the giant Aughinish Alumina plant just three miles away. Tests by the British Agricultural Development Advisory Service (ADAS) found aluminium traces in dead cattle on the Ryan farm in Askeaton which were almost 20 times the levels considered safe.

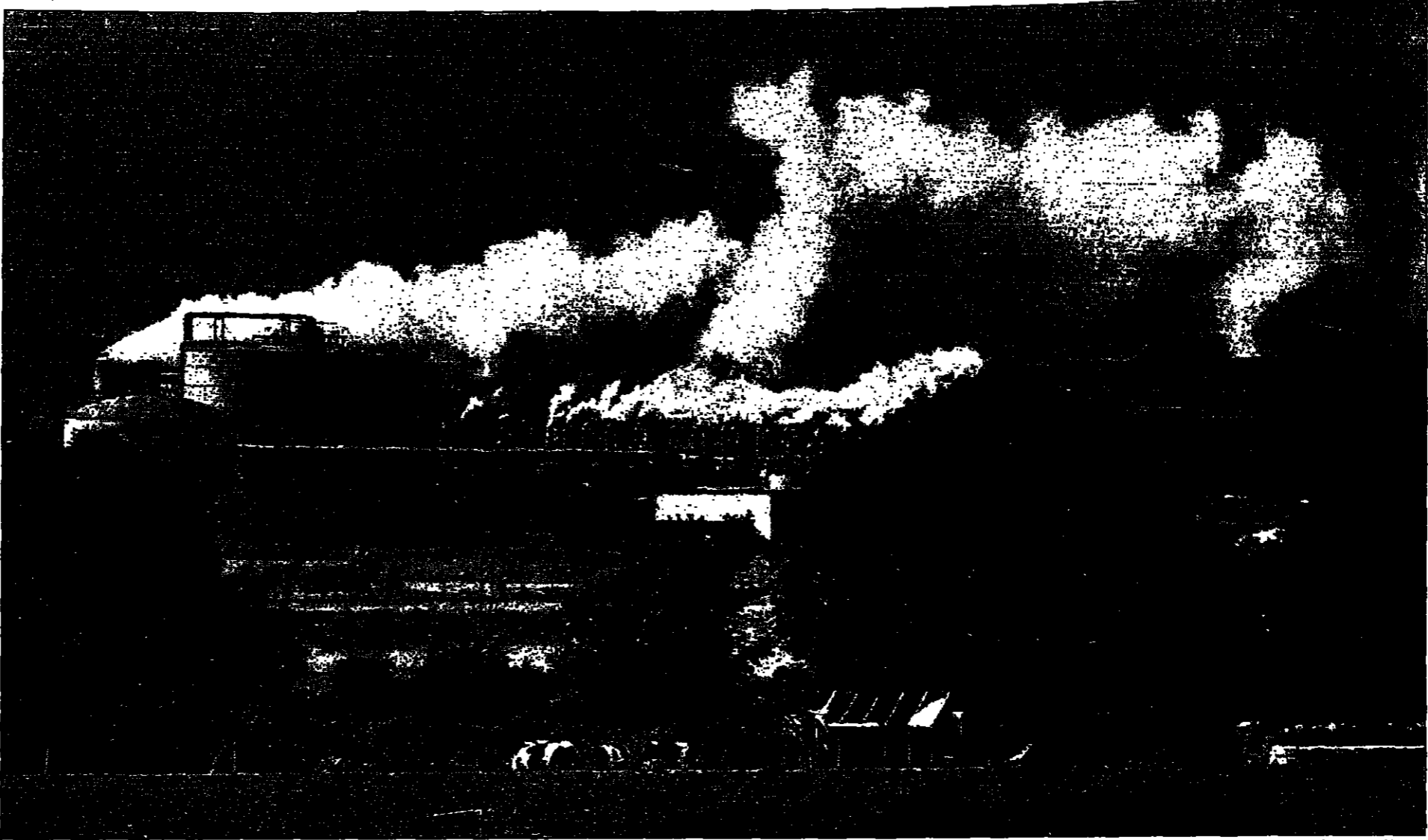
ADAS confirmed to the farmer that high aluminium levels were present in bone ash from his animals. Three animals showed aluminium levels of 117 parts per million, 119 ppm and 790 ppm, many times greater than the danger levels.

Chris Livesey, a vet and head of toxicology and nutrition at Britain's Central Veterinary Laboratory, emphasised that aluminium is one of the most commonly-found elements. Testing is easily contaminated by aluminium from other sources. Scientists admit to uncertainty over what levels of aluminium are toxic, but confirm it is linked to animal disorders involving secondary phosphate deficiency.

After aluminium sulphate accidentally contaminated water supplies in Camelford, Cornwall, in 1988, associated illnesses ranged from gastrointestinal disturbances to rashes and mouth ulcers. A neuro-psychologist who tested 20 local people found some suffered minor brain damage causing loss of co-ordination.

Emissions also drift towards Askeaton from Moneypoint, the Irish Republic's only coal-fired power station 15 miles away. Critics complain it lacks basic "scrubber" filters and spews out thick smoke.

Initially, some investigators suspected iodine deficiency was a factor in the cattle deaths. A soil expert who helped investigate the Ballymore case says iodine levels "can be pivotal", affecting animal fertility, prolonging gestation and causing weak or "soft" calves. Vets are wary, however.



In the dock: Locals blame Aughinish alumina plant on the Shannon, western Ireland, for the deaths of 20 cattle, but doubt remains over the evidence Photograph: Brian Harris

Iodine deficiencies, sometimes associated with goitrogens – naturally occurring chemicals in some clovers and other pasture plants that inhibit utilising iodine – might explain animals' failure to thrive. But none could cite instances where it caused widespread cattle deaths.

The possibility that emissions from Aughinish or Moneypoint are involved is tempered by the fact that both are some distance from the worst-affected farms. Some investigators believe that had Aughinish's emissions affected cattle, those hit would most likely be "literally over the wall".

Both plants emit sulphur dioxide from their respective oil and coal fuels. If it were causing lethal animal health problems, enormous concentrations would have to be involved.

Aughinish Alumina strongly rejects suggestions that the company is contributing to health problems in the area.

Pat Lynch, corporate affairs director, points out that the plant is subject to 64 impositions "covering all aspects of emissions" laid down in county council planning permission, given after a public inquiry.

The firm pays for monitoring by a state agency from a ring of points around the plant. "There has never been a problem," he insists.

Aughinish processes more than 1 million tonnes of bauxite imported from west Africa into alumina for export to smelters abroad. Bauxite is crushed and ground, with alumina dissolved from "red mud" residue by the Bayer method, using caustic sodium hydroxide.

Mr Lynch says the principal emission is sulphur dioxide from burning fuel oil. He discounts high aluminium traces in cattle bone ash as a cause for concern. The element is "universally present", and abnormal readings can easily occur, he says.

He attributes animal illness to imbalances in mineral trace elements in pasture and lack of supplements. Farming practice has changed radically in the last two decades, Mr Lynch claims, resulting in cattle "not getting a balanced input, leading over a number of years to deficiencies that border on the dangerous".

Nitrogen and copper levels in grassland have often not been properly tested, he says. "They (the farmers) have been playing with dynamite."



Suffering: Scientists are investigating unexplained abnormalities among cows

Farm plagued by sickness

Overlooking the broadest stretch of the River Shannon deep, Justin and Suzanne Ryan could hardly have a more scenic location for their 85-acre dairy farm, writes Alan Murdoch.

Only minutes away, past a forest park and long lanes with thick hedgerows, coachloads of tourists stop and marvel at nearby Adare's fairytale thatched cottages and multi-coloured summer gardens, a vision of clean Irish country living.

The same once applied on the Ryan farm. Through the 1980s their Friesian herd never lost a single adult cow to sickness. A 1981 study showed local animal health good, milk yields buoyant and bovine mortality below average.

"That whole picture has been overturned," says Mr Ryan in the front room of his modern

farmhouse. Since 1988, ever larger numbers of animals on local farms have been dying in circumstances that have left local vets bewildered.

Cows developed fever and mastitis after calving. Some died shortly before they were due to give birth. Others failed to produce milk. Since 1990, 49 cows have died mysteriously. Several first went lame in all four legs.

Vets tried mineral supplements, but despite this, problems worsened. "You could see the animals deteriorating rapidly," said Mr Ryan. After 25 years of dairy farming, he was struck by unusual cattle behaviour: "For a full month from mid-October last you couldn't find a lick mark on any animal," he said, citing a normally-constant bovine habit. Extensive hair loss prompted cows to scratch

themselves against fences until they bled.

Still-births, abortions and extended labour increased. Cows that previously gave birth after 36 hours labour now agonised for 100 hours, forcing Caesarean births.

Autopsies showed severe lesions of the lung and gut. The 45 cows that were left all but stopped coming into heat. "If at all, it was just for half an hour," said Mr Ryan. "The bull would want to be quick to spot them," his wife adds wryly.

Like other farmers, the Ryans saw a dramatic rise in previously-rare twin births. Illness also hit newer animals. Of seven top-priced replacement heifers bought last year, only four survived the winter.

Wildlife also seems affected. "Foxes came into the yard all last winter, dying," Mrs Ryan

recalls. "There was obviously something wrong. You clapped and they didn't move."

Two of the Ryans's four children also became ill. Alex, the youngest, now almost three, developed rashes all over his body, with one eye inflamed and badly swollen. A specialist was baffled. Both Alex and his brother, Eric, who developed blistered arms and legs, quickly recovered after the family switched from drinking the farm's own milk.

The Golden Vale dairy group stopped using the Ryans's reduced milk output on health grounds in March, while still paying for it.

Mr Ryan's family have worked the same land for 200 years. He is resigned to having no future in Askeaton, his only hope is selling up and moving to another, safer, piece of land.

Rail line hoists fares before privatisation

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Great Western Railway, one of the first rail lines being privatised, put up fares by almost 3 per cent on 24 September without any public announcement.

The rise, the second this year, means many fares for passengers on GWR, which runs the InterCity services out of Paddington, will have risen by just under 5 per cent this year.

The standard single from London to Bath, which went up

by 50p in January, goes up a further £1 to £27.50, while the first class fare from London to Penzance, which went up from £76.50 to £78 in January, rose to £80.

Most SuperSaver fares, the cheapest fares for leisure travellers, went up by 50p or £1, and only Saver fares have not been increased. It was only when an angry reader rang the Independent that the rises came to light.

Knowles Mitchell, GWR's PR manager, said that the fares increase "was a result of our

commercial judgement" and was not connected with the imminent privatisation of the line.

Mr Mitchell at first denied this was the second rise this year for GWR's first class passengers, but then accepted there had been an increase of 1.9 per cent earlier this year. He said GWR had not issued a press release because it was under no obligation to do so. "We have fulfilled our statutory duty by telling the local rail users' committee. But we are a commercial company, and we have no

obligation to tell anyone else. The supermarkets don't shout from the rooftops when they put up the price of Coca-Cola."

GWR is in the first batch of three lines to be franchised out. Final bids from the four tenderers are due in by the end of this month.

Barry Doe, a railway consultant who specialises in timetabling, said: "This is a very steep increase on what is already one of the most expensive lines, per mile, on the railway."

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TODAY our Classic Holidays competition takes an 11-day tour of Sri Lanka, the tear-drop island that abounds in magnificent beaches, virgin rainforests and rare flora and fauna. Like all the five holiday prizes we have on offer, the Sri Lankan Experience is for two people, is organised by Cox & Kings and will genuinely provide a holiday of a lifetime.

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Your tour returns to Colombo for a sightseeing day before the return flight to the UK.

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The Sri Lankan Experience can be taken between January and April 1996 or in October 1996, subject to availability.

For further information on the Sri Lankan Experience and Cox & Kings call: 0171 873 5000.

RULES

- 1 To enter our Classic Holidays prize draw you need to collect 5 differently numbered tokens, including one from the Independent on Sunday.
- 2 An entry form will be printed on Friday 6 October 1996. The closing date for entries is 23 October 1996.
- 3 For previously published tokens or an entry form send an SAE to: Independent Classic Holidays Prize Draw, (Token Request OR Entry Form), PO Box 83, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 1TT. State the tokens you require (only 4 per application). If you need tokens or an entry form, please send separate SAE's. Requests must be received by first post 13 October 1996.
- 4 Employees and agents of Newspaper Publishing plc or those of any other national

- 5 newspaper company or any firm connected with the promotion are not eligible to take part, neither are their relatives nor members of their families or households.
- 6 Winners must co-operate for publicity purposes if required and accept their names and photographs will be published in the paper.
- 7 Photocopies of tokens are not acceptable.
- 8 The five holidays will be allocated at random to the first five entries selected in the prize draw. Normal Newspaper Publishing rules apply. There is no cash alternative. The Editor's decision is final.

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Police chiefs' conference: Light sentences attacked in call to support victims of crime

Howard demands sympathy for the 'have-a-go heroes'

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

"Have-a-go heroes" who use violence to defend themselves against burglars and vandals should be treated more sympathetically by the police and the criminal justice system, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, said yesterday.

Mr Howard implied that some police officers were being over-zealous in charging people defending their property with offences such as assault. "The impression is sometimes given that the victim is treated more harshly than the villain," he said. He also made a thinly veiled attack on magistrates and judges for giving short or lenient sentences to criminals, particularly in the cases of domestic burglary. He said he was "surprised" to discover that only 10 per cent of first-time burglars are given a jail sentence when convicted at magistrates' courts.

Speaking at the Police Superintendents' Association annual conference in Market Bosworth, Warwickshire, Mr Howard announced that he had asked the Director of Public Prosecutions to review the standards needed for charging someone with assault. He said he was particularly concerned with cases in which someone defending themselves is charged, but after further investigation has the charges dropped.

The issue was highlighted earlier this year with a number of cases that caused public outcry including that of 82-year-old Ted Newberry, from Ilkeston,

Derbyshire, who was ordered to pay £4,000 after he fired a 12-bore shot gun at Mark Revill, an intruder trying to break into his garden shed. In June Major Roy Bannister-Parker, a retired war veteran, who allegedly broke into his house, was arrested and charged with assault.

Mr Howard suggested that if in doubt the police should consult the Crown Prosecution Service about a case before arresting or charging the suspect. "We must bear in mind the needless worry caused and anxiety to people who have already had their home or property violated, if they then have to wait several weeks to discover whether they must face court proceedings when they themselves are the real victims."

Mr Howard denied he was encouraging people to use violence. "I am not suggesting people should take policing into their own hands, or 'have a go,'" he said.

Chief Superintendent Brian Mackenzie, president of the Superintendents' Association of England and Wales, said: "There is something wrong in our approach to victims when a pensioner who tackles two heroin addicts burgling his home finds himself complained about by the burglar and arrested for assault. It seems to me that we need to look again at the concept of self-defence and reasonable force."

Mr Howard also took a swipe at sentencing policies, some of which "still cause public dismay". "There is no point in Par-

liament providing the powers if the courts do not make full use of them," he argued.

He was "surprised" that a recent survey showed that the average sentence length for first offenders in burglary convictions at magistrates' is 3.7 months - the maximum is six months - and that the average for 10 or more convictions (not necessarily all for burglary) is about four months. In the Crown Court, where the maximum sentence for domestic burglary is 14 years, the average for first-time offenders convicted for a break-in was 14.4 months. The average for those with 10 or more previous convictions was 17.6 months.

"Maximum penalties are there to be used in the most serious cases," he said. "It is the courts' job to make full use of these powers."



Hot stuff: A fire eater and a robot joining the launch of the new National Association of Street Entertainers at Tower Hill, London, yesterday. The group aims to promote quality performances throughout the country and campaign against obstruction laws. Photograph: Edward Webb

Pensioner's defence of his property put him in the dock

LIZ SEARL

Ted Newberry, a retired hospital porter, so was fed up with vandals destroying his allotment at Ilkeston in Derbyshire that the pensioner decided to sleep in his allotment shed to catch the culprits red-handed.

But instead of finding vandals during his vigil in 1988, he realised that the noise he could hear outside was that of would-be burglars trying to break into the shed. So Mr Newberry took up a 12-bore shotgun and fired what he said was intended to be a warning shot through a hole in the shed roof, because he feared for his life.

The shot hit one of the intruders, Mark Revill, then 22, who was left with 50 shotgun pellets embedded in his body. Seven years ago, a jury cleared Mr Newberry of deliberately injuring Mr Revill, because of the pensioner's claim he acted purely in self-defence.

Mr Revill, also from Ilkeston, was jailed for six months for the attempted break-in and other offences. Last year, the father of four pursued a civil suit for damages, claiming that the close-range shot had left him suffering from regular blackouts and little use in his right arm and two of his fingers.



Ted Newberry: shot intruder

At Nottingham High Court the judge, Mr Justice Roushier, ruled that Mr Newberry, 83, had been negligent when he fired through the shed door. He said it would have been more sensible to turn on the light or shout. In a decision which provoked widespread protests at the time, he awarded Mr Revill £12,100 for his injuries, which was reduced to £4,033 because he ruled that the burglar himself was two-thirds to blame for the incident.

As hundreds of people sent in cash donations to contribute to Mr Newberry's repayments, Mr Justice Roushier defended his ruling and said that although he was "receiving hate mail about his decision he threw it all unopened into the bin."

Safety of children gets urgent review

An urgent review into whether new powers are needed to protect children from paedophiles is being conducted by the Home Office, it was disclosed yesterday, writes Jason Bennett.

Mr Howard said he welcomed suggestions by the police to introduce new "child protection orders", in which all convicted paedophiles would be forced to inform the police if they moved home. Child abusers would also be banned for life from working with children in the private, public or voluntary sector.

Mr Howard has also asked the Association of Chief Police Officers to suggest possible changes in the laws. "We are conducting an urgent review," The Superintendents' Association said yesterday that they were also concerned with the increasing use of the Internet information highway to distribute child pornography.

Chief Supt Brian Mackenzie, president of the Superintendents' Association, told the conference: "A number of high-profile child murders coupled, with increasing paedophile activity assisted by the use of the information superhighway or Internet, makes this topic more and more important."

He added: "There have been recent newspaper reports of convicted paedophiles discovered living in flats overlooking a school playground, whilst a social worker is reported as having said that sex with an eight-year-old is acceptable, if the child agrees."

As an illustration he said that Rosie Palmer, aged three, in Hartlepool, was murdered by a man living a few doors away, who had been involved in previous incidents of child molestation which were not reported. He believes this information would have helped the police identify the man more quickly as a suspect.

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news

Grass 'on raid to fool Yardies'

A Yardie supergrass took part in a "terrifying" armed robbery to convince his gang he was not an informer, a court was told yesterday. Eaton Green, 28, was jailed for six years at Leeds Crown Court for the robbery at a Nottingham blues party.

Mr Justice Smedley told him the sentence was "substantially reduced" because of the help he had given the Metropolitan Police. The court heard that Green's gang announced they were the Sad Posse - Seek and Destroy - before terrorising and robbing about 100 guests at the party. Green also shot one of the male guests in the foot.

He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to rob, wounding and possessing a firearm with intent to endanger life at a second trial in Leicester in June.

The first trial was abandoned after Green's role as an "A1" police informant on Jamaican Yardie gangs was revealed.

The court was told that Green came to Britain in 1991 and became a registered informant soon after.

Nicholas Gardiner, for the defence, told the court: "He was of great importance to the police because of the difficulty there is in gaining information on these organisations."

"Few people are prepared to assist with information because of the terror of reprisal."

Mr Gardiner added: "The international Yardie community will obviously be looking for him and, to put it plainly, if he's caught he will be killed."

Mr Justice Smedley said: "You took part in this terrifying robbery, weapons being fired into the ceiling, your weapon being discharged on the floor."

"That sort of appalling violence can only result in people receiving substantial prison sentences in the region of 14 years."

But he described Green's decision to give evidence for the prosecution at the second trial as "exceedingly courageous", adding: "It does mean that I shall give you a substantial discount on your sentence."



Fruits of labour: A judge assessing apples in the Royal Horticultural Society's fruit and vegetable competition at Westminster, London, yesterday

Photograph: Edward Webb

Life-support boy, 5, dies after court ruling

BILL BROWN

A five-year-old brain-damaged child has died in a Channel Islands hospital two days after the Islands' Royal Court gave permission for the medical treatment that kept the boy alive to be ended.

The court sat for four hours in St Helier, Jersey, on Saturday before deciding to allow doctors to withdraw feeding tubes and end treatment.

It was the first time such an application had been made in the Channel Islands. The court has ordered that the identity of the family be protected.

The boy, referred to as Michael, suffered brain damage after he was found near the bottom of a private swimming pool on Jersey on 4 September. Michael's father desperately tried to resuscitate his son even though he appeared to be dead, having been under water for 10 to 15 minutes. An ambulance crew continued the resuscitation attempt and by the time they reached hospital Michael had a heartbeat.

The court's landmark judgment was made public yesterday afternoon. Judge Deputy Bailiff Francis Hamon said this verdict did not open the way to euthanasia cases. He confirmed the sanctity of human life but said doctors' evidence showed that the last vestiges of hope of a recovery had gone.

Peter Garrett of the anti-abortion group Life said that things had moved too quickly. He compared the case to the long-running legal battle over a victim of the Hillsborough disaster. "They have gone through in three weeks what took years in that case."

Mr Garrett added: "I would have taken advice from more specialists. He should have been kept alive, you can't make these

decisions in less than two years. The boy was in a lot of pain and compassion has moved them in the direction of acceleration."

Dr Henry Spratt, a consultant paediatrician, told the court that Michael opened his eyes the day after the accident, but began suffering severe spasms. A brain scan revealed the extent of his injuries. He was transferred to a specialist unit at Southampton General Hospital and began to recover.

There was one dissenting voice over Michael's case. Consultant paediatric neurologist Dr Colin Kennedy, at the Southampton unit, wrote: "The chances of him dying in the near future remain substantial. On the other hand, there is a small chance that his survival will be prolonged."

Dr Spratt said that when Michael returned to Jersey his condition deteriorated to the point where it was believed that all hopes of recovery were gone. "This leaves in its wake the great practical problem of how to relieve the continuing pitiable suffering of this likely dying child," he said.

On 26 September Michael's father asked for feeding to stop. In a letter shown to the court he wrote: "Furnish medical treatment for the sole purpose of enabling him to end his life and die peacefully with the greatest dignity and the least distress." The order was given and Michael died yesterday at 7am.

Giving his judgment, Judge Hamon said: "We do not believe that in this judgment we have interfered in any way with the hallowed concepts of criminal law. We must reiterate that we confirm, above all things, the sanctity of human life."

"We believe that how Michael died will affect how his short life is remembered by those who grieve his passing."

DAILY POEM

World Service

By Hugo Williams

Ten to four and the World Service is still on upstairs, which means that you are sleeping well again tonight, which means that it got you off to sleep and hasn't yet woken you again. The sound of waves from the sea at the foot of the cliff washes over the voices coming and going in waves. A motor scooter starts up, then fizzles out again.

I can't sleep, so I get up and look out of the window onto the dim-lit esplanade, where one or two couples are finding their way home from the clubs. I feel jealous and sad, but I like to see them, lingering at discreet intervals under the palm trees. Out at sea, the last fishing boats are coming in, their big lamps slung below the horizon like stars.

For a moment, the broadcast voices upstairs rises above the waves, insistent, incoherent, cracked. You wake yourself and manage to reach out a hand to switch it off. 6.30 and the World Service is quiet, which means that you are sleeping well again tonight. Far below, the beach tractor ploughs back and forth, readying the beach for another day.

Hugo Williams was born in 1942 in Windsor and brought up in Sussex. He worked on the *London Magazine* from 1961 to 1970 and his first poetry collection *Symptoms of Loss* appeared in 1965. Since then he has earned his living as a journalist, critic and travel writer. In the late 1960s he was awarded both Gregory and Cholmondeley Awards and six further collections have appeared including *Dock Leaves*, from which this poem is taken, published in 1994. *Preluding: Adventures of a poet*, Hugo Williams's collection of writings from the TLS, is published next week by Faber.

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Britain and China clinch deal to ease handover of colony

MIKHAEL IHERIDAN
Diplomatic Editor

Britain and China yesterday reached a verbal agreement on new measures to smooth the transfer of power in Hong Kong but the Chinese Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, remained insistent that the colony's elected legislature would be abolished.

The Foreign Minister, the first senior Chinese visitor to London in three years, was speaking during a day of talks with the Home Minister, John Major and the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind.

British officials were keen to stress the achievement of two objectives which should ease the handover of Hong Kong in 1997. The two sides agreed to establish formal contacts between civil servants in the Hong Kong government and Chinese officials, allowing heads of department to liaise on practical issues before the transition. They also decided that a preparatory committee should negotiate the details of the ceremonial and protocol aspects of the arrangements on 6 June 1997.

Both measures represented welcome progress, from the British point of view, after a long period of rigid relations characterised by firm statements in

support of democracy from the Governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, which drew reproach from the Chinese. "These new measures are important practical steps which embed the Hong Kong government ever more deeply in the transition and should give reassurance to the people of Hong Kong", a British official said.

But there was no discussion



Qian: 'No' to legislature

of the inflexible Chinese position that there can be no future for the elected Legislative Council which lies at the heart of Mr Patten's democratic reforms. In elections held on 17 September, pro-democracy politicians swept to victory over candidates backed by Peking.

Britain has in the past urged China to consider the fact that

the council's existence enhanced international confidence in the stability and prosperity of the colony. However, Mr Qian made it clear before arriving in London that China would not tolerate its continued role. The chief objection by Peking to the council is that it was elected under rules that were drawn up without Chinese consent.

Speaking at the Foreign Office yesterday, Mr Qian dismissed the Legislative Council as "a question already discussed".

British officials took comfort from the fact that Mr Qian's visit took place at all. China was so incensed by the Patten reforms that it had put a freeze on high-level contacts with Britain. That in turn threatened British interests in the enormous and rapidly developing market of modern China.

The British and Hong Kong governments are now addressing China with two separate, if not necessarily discordant, voices. The Hong Kong government has taken up the cause of democratic institutions and the rule of law in the colony, which will continue to irritate the Chinese. The Foreign Office in London, however, will concentrate on developing trade ties and fostering relations between Britain and China.



Clean-up: A Sri Lankan soldier sweeping for mines during the anti-rebel offensive

Colombo troops maul Tigers

TIM MCGIRK
New Delhi

In Sri Lanka's 13-year civil war between the government and ethnic Tamils, rebel commanders usually send their feared Black Tigers in their first assault wave. Nurtured for martyrdom by relentless Tamil propaganda and commando training, the kamikaze teenagers are only too ready to sacrifice themselves.

Their favourite tactic is to defy enemy gunfire and crash a lorry packed with explosives into a Sri Lankan army garrison. But this failed disastrously yesterday, when rebels tried to recapture mortar positions which had been overrun on the previous night by 7,500 troops on the northern Jaffna peninsula.

Instead of bunting, the Sri Lankan forces spread out on the south-eastern side of Jaffna peninsula, denying the suicide squads any identifiable targets.

Confused, the Black Tigers fell prey to the entrenched Sri Lankan gunners. In two days of battle, nearly 300 Tamil rebels were killed, many of them in hand-to-hand combat. Government sources said only 63 soldiers died while repelling the rebel attack. The army fatalities were so low, explained one official spokesman, because they outnumbered the enemy by seven to one.

With this victory, the Sri Lankan forces have at last cleared away Tamil mortars which pounded their airstrip at Palaly, the main military base on the Jaffna peninsula. The rebels control the remainder of this tongue of land.

From their Jaffna stronghold, the Tigers have extended their reach into the northern and eastern regions but since a cease-fire broke down six months ago, Sri Lankan forces have been winning it back.

The Tigers' radio, monitored in Colombo, claimed yesterday that over 50,000 Tamil civilians had fled the military's assault.

Officials put the number far lower. The Defence Minister, Amruddha Ratwatte, said that the Tigers would be defeated by the year's end. "The government is not going to slow down

or abandon the war, but it will be fought to a finish within the next two or three months."

Diplomats dismiss this forecast as overly optimistic, if not impossible. More than 500,000 Tamils live in Jaffna city, and any siege would cause heavy casualties. Even if the Tigers lose Jaffna, they are well-armed, fanatical, and have camps and ammunition caches in the northern jungles. They have also infiltrated mainland India.

The strategy used by the president, Chandrika Kumaratunga, is to use military power to drag the Tigers back to peace talks. But as the Sri Lankan forces near Jaffna, diplomats and opposition politicians are worried that an all-out attack might succeed only in convincing the Tamils that they can never make peace.

Gaddafi to visit expelled Palestinians

Cairo - The Libyan leader, Muammar Gaddafi, is to visit a camp for expelled Palestinians stranded in no man's land between Libya and Egypt and give a press conference on the border. Colonel Gaddafi ordered the expulsion of all 30,000 Palestinians in his country to show up what he says is the failure of the Israeli-PLO autonomy accords to create a viable Palestinian homeland. According to the United Nations, 5,000 Palestinians have already been thrown out of Libya and 160 families are stranded in no man's land after Egypt refused them entry.

Gunmen murder banana workers

Bogota - In an attack copying others that have shocked Colombians, gunmen ordered 11 banana-plantation workers off a bus in the north-western region of Uraba and murdered two women. The attackers told the workers to lie face down then singled out two middle-aged women and shot them in the head. The others were left to spread word of the attack, which occurred despite heavy security in the region.

Egyptians face terror trial in Denmark

Copenhagen - Three Egyptians living in Denmark face trial next year on charges of planning acts of terrorism in Denmark. The trial, starting on 20 February, will be the first involving alleged terrorism by Islamic militants in the country. The three men, who cannot be named under a court order, had been named by US authorities in connection with the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, although they were never charged with that crime.

Banda fraud inquiry

Blantyre - The Malawian government is to investigate whether the former dictator, Hastings Banda (right), defrauded the state of taxable profits as he amassed a fortune. State radio said the government of President Bakili Muluzi, who ousted Mr Banda in elections last year, ordered investigations into Press Trust and Press Holdings, Banda-owned firms said to control 60 per cent of the economy.



Turbulent newspaper back on the streets

Moscow - Nezavisimaya Gazeta, an independent newspaper that made its mark during perestroika and glasnost, resumed publishing yesterday after a four-month hiatus. Bedevilled by a deep financial crisis and bitter internal conflicts, it shut on 24 May. At one point, the editor-in-chief, Vitaly Tretyakov, showed up at the paper with a team of bodyguards. He eventually found financing from a local bank and started off an internal coup.

Belgium jails anti-Algerians militants

Brussels - A court convicted seven suspected supporters of an Islamic militant group, but freed the man prosecutors named as a leading figure in the group's violent campaign to overthrow the Algerian government. The court found there was insufficient evidence to convict Ahmed Zaoui, an Algerian accused of playing a key role in an underground network supporting the Armed Islamic Group, or GIA. Of the seven convicted, Ben Boudriah and Rachid Abdelli received the maximum sentence of five years on charges of criminal associations. Five others were sent to jail for sentences ranging from three months to four years.

Sperm bank goes bust

Paris - Several couples have been barred from taking their donations of semen from a sperm bank in Paris which has gone bankrupt. The attorney supervising its liquidation, Gilles Pellegrini, said the Health Ministry had imposed the ban until the frozen donations lodged with the Foundation for Hormone Research were moved to another sperm bank.

US asked to cut bases in Okinawa rape row

RICHARD LOYD PARRY
Tokyo

The Japanese government yesterday asked the United States to reduce its military presence on the island of Okinawa, in the latest attempt to appease growing outrage over a rape allegedly committed by three American servicemen.

Japan's Foreign Minister, Yoshio Kono, made the request in a meeting with the US ambassador, Vester Mondale, but the scale of his planned reduction was immediately thrown into doubt. Okinawa contains three-quarters of the US bases in Japan, a perpetual source of resentment on an island that makes up less than 1 per cent of the country's area.

Foreign Ministry officials suggested the Okinawa's burden might be reduced to less than 70 per cent, but this was contradicted by the Defence Minister, Shinichi Eto, who said that such a scaling down would be "difficult" in the light of Japan's obligations under the Japan-US Security Treaty.

Military sites being considered for relocation elsewhere in Japan include three of the most controversial on Okinawa: a key port, first earmarked for return in 1974, a parachuting practice ground close to farms and houses, and an artillery range over a main road which has attracted complaints about unexploded shells and environmental damage.

Yesterday's announcement provoked scepticism on Okinawa, which was governed directly by America from 1945 until its reversion to Japan in 1972. "For 10 years, they've been saying they would return these sites," said a spokesman for the Okinawa prefectural government. "They could have dealt with it long ago, and right now we don't expect too much."

The island has been in uproar since the beginning of September, when a 12-year-old schoolgirl was abducted and gang-raped, allegedly by an American sailor and two Marines. Government officials, military officers and even President Bill Clinton have offered

repeated expressions of regret, discipline has been tightly enforced and sales of alcohol have been restricted on base. US Marines will suspend operations for a "day of reflection" on the crime and its consequences.

But the gestures have done little to stem local anger. There have been daily demonstrations in Okinawa and Tokyo, where chants of "Yankee Go Home!" have brought back memories of the 1960s, when opposition to the security treaty provoked riots in Tokyo. As many as 40,000 people are expected to attend a rally on 21 October.

Yesterday the list of Okinawa's 53 municipal assemblies unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a review of the bilateral Status of Forces Agreement, which allowed the three suspects to remain in US custody until their indictment by Japanese prosecutors last Friday.

Last week the governor of Okinawa, Masahide Ota, refused to sign documents allowing the US military to commandeer land occupied by military sites.

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Bomb blast injures Macedonian President

SASA PESEV
Associated Press

Skopje — A car bomb exploded in central Skopje yesterday as the car of the Macedonian President, Kiro Gligorov, passed by, injuring the leader of the Balkan republic and killing his driver.

Macedonia, formerly part of Yugoslavia, is potentially a tinder box. Fears that the violence which has swept Bosnia and Croatia could also envelop Macedonia have already led the United Nations to put in peace-keeping forces.

Doctors said they had operated on Mr Gligorov, 78, for head injuries, and Saso Ordonoski, director of Macedonian television said the President had lost his right eye. Official sources said that on Macedonia's request, a French medical team arrived to help care for the President. "For now, Gligorov's life is not in danger," an official police statement said. Doctors said any head injury was serious for a man of Mr Gligorov's age.

Police said that the President's driver, Alexander Spirovski, was killed. His security officer and five pedestrians were injured when the remote-control bomb exploded.

About 45lb of explosives were packed into the boot of an old Citroen and Mr Gligorov's armoured Mercedes took the brunt of the blast. Television film showed the car with its front right door ripped open, and Mr Gligorov's rear right door closed, but penetrated by metal shrapnel. A man who appeared to be badly injured was lying on the pavement, gesturing for help.



Balkan tragedy: The Macedonian leader's driver lying dead after a bomb ripped open President Kiro Gligorov's Mercedes. Mr Gligorov (right) may have lost an eye



Photograph AP

Witnesses at the scene of the blast, near the Bristol Hotel, in the centre of the city, said most windows as high as the ninth floor on nearby buildings were shattered by the explosion, which occurred at about 9.30am. The site is about 100 yards from Mr Gligorov's offices.

Police said two suspects in their mid 20s were arrested, but their identities were not known.

No one immediately claimed responsibility. Borders were sealed for several hours after the explosion, but were later reopened, police said. Thorough checks were being made of travel documents. Police sources said that anti-terrorism experts from the United States were to help in the investigation.

Macedonia gained independence in the break-up of the old Yugoslav federation, but has

found independence difficult. The republic has a large ethnic Albanian minority and is a historic point of contention for neighbouring Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Albania. About 1,000 US soldiers are stationed on Macedonia's northern border with Serbia in the UN's first precautionary peace-keeping mission. Despite its volatile politics, Macedonia has largely been peaceful.

Local media speculated the bomb might be the work of Macedonian nationalists who are strongly opposed to compromises with the republic's neighbours. Mr Gligorov was a leading Communist official in former Yugoslavia, and was elected Macedonia's President in 1992. He returned on Monday from a one-day trip to Belgrade, where he had talks with Serbia's

President, Slobodan Milosevic, on mutual recognition of the two former Yugoslav states. Mr Gligorov said mutual recognition between rump Yugoslavia and Macedonia was expected by early November, but suggested it depended on a peace agreement for Bosnia. Serbia has not recognised its southern neighbour because of border disputes and solidarity with Greece, which claimed

Macedonia has territorial aspirations on its province bearing the same name. Greece condemned the attack on Mr Gligorov. A spokesman, Telemachos Hytias, expressed the government's "abhorrence and condemnation" of the attack, and said that Mr Gligorov had survived. Bulgaria also condemned the attack, as did the German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel.

Macedonia and Greece signed a US-brokered agreement on 15 September, under which Greece recognised its northern neighbor without recognising its name. Greece will also lift an 18-month trade embargo after Macedonia changes its flag to delete an ancient Greek symbol, and declares that its constitution does not imply claims on Greek territory.

Serbs and Croats strike east Slavonia deal

JOVANA GEC
Associated Press

Erdut — Rebel Serbs in Croatia agreed in principle yesterday to allow the return of Croatian authority over the small swath of territory they still control in eastern Slavonia, after a transition period.

The agreement, reached at the first talks between Croats and rebel Serbs since a Croat offensive against the Serbs in August, may solve a dispute that could otherwise derail US efforts to end the war in neighbouring Bosnia.

"This is an important first step for a peaceful resolution of the crisis," the UN negotiator Thorvald Stoltenberg said after the talks, which he co-hosted with the US ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith.

Following the adoption of an 11-point document of basic principles, "we see a negotiated peaceful settlement within the internationally recognised borders of Croatia on the basis of internationally recognised human rights," he added.

Solving the dispute over the Serb-held territory in eastern Slavonia is vital to any settlement that may be reached to end the war in Bosnia.

Mr Galbraith, who has been shuttling for months between the rebel Serb leaders and Croatian officials, described the agreement as "a significant step forward".

But he cautioned that tough negotiations lay ahead. "This is a skeleton for reaching an agreement," he said.

The 11-point basic principles for further negotiations include Croatia's right of sovereignty over the region, deployment of international forces in the area during a transition period, de-

militarisation of the region and the return of thousands of Croat refugees who fled when the Serbs took the region in the 1991 Serb-Croat war.

Mr Galbraith said that among the unresolved issues was the length of the transition period. Serbs wanted five years, while the Croats said it should not exceed 18 months.

Croatia has warned that it would retake the region by force if an agreement on its peaceful reintegration is not reached before 30 November, when a UN peace-keeping mandate expires.

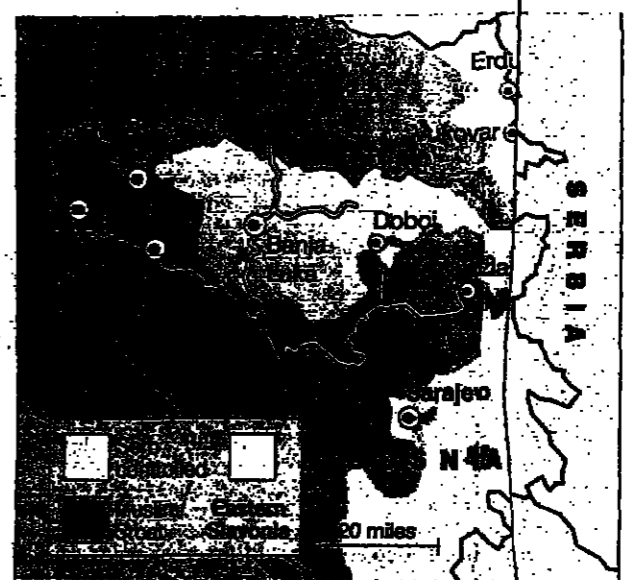
In early August, Croat troops recaptured most of the territory held by Serbs since the 1991 war, which followed Croatia's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia.

Croatia mounted that offensive against the Serb-held Krajina region despite assurances from Mr Galbraith that Serbs had promised at the last minute to agree to the peaceful reintegration of Serb-held areas into Croatia. About 160,000 Serbs fled the Krajina offensive. Serbia, which originally backed the rebel Serbs in Croatia and in Bosnia, did not intervene.

The document agreed yesterday said that "a transitional authority shall be established by the UN Security Council to administer the region during the transition period."

The authority will include a way to represent the interests of the Croatian government, local Serbs, returning refugees, displaced persons and ethnic minorities, the document said.

The authority "will also take steps to re-establish Croatian institutions in the region such as telephones, post offices, banks, pension offices, passport and citizenship offices."



Discord mars German Unity Day celebrations

TERRENCE PETTY
Associated Press

Bonn — Left-wing demonstrators skirmished with police in Düsseldorf as Germany observed the fifth anniversary of unification by toasting its achievements but lamenting that in many ways the country is still not whole.

Speeches at Unity Day observances and a television address by Chancellor Helmut Kohl made it clear: West Germany and Communist East Germany drifted so far apart during four decades of forced separation that they will not be truly united for many years to come. "It is true that not all wishes have been fulfilled in the past five years," said Mr Kohl, who as West German Chancellor steered the two Germanys to unification on 3 October 1990.

Fears among security officials that left-wing extremists would try to disrupt the government's main Unity Day celebration in Düsseldorf proved right. Before dawn, militants set alight a car, hurled stones at police and smashed the windows of a bank and department store. Police ar-

rested six youths and confiscated various weapons.

About 3,000 protesters marched through Düsseldorf in the afternoon, flanked by riot police. The demonstrators carried banners reading "Five Years of Unity — There's Nothing To Celebrate". At a rally, protesters said united Germany was heading towards militarism, pointing out the government's decision to let German soldiers take part in UN and Nato combat missions abroad. Unity Day celebrations are hosted each year by whichever of Germany's 16 regional states holds the presidency in the upper house of parliament — this year it is North Rhine-Westphalia, of which Düsseldorf is the capital.

Inside a concert hall surrounded by police, Mr Kohl, President Roman Herzog and other guests heard Johannes Rau, premier of North Rhine-Westphalia, lament that psychological and material barriers among Germans remain after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

"The inner divisions have disappeared, but reservations and prejudices have made some invisible gaps wider and deeper than before. Much remains to

be done, above all in the heads and hearts of Germans," said Mr Rau.

Germans from the two parts of the country tend to be suspicious of one another, with many westerners bitter that costs have gone up to pay for unity and many easterners believing their lives are dominated by the more affluent west. Mr Rau said completing unity is Germany's "task of the century" and "bringing back together that which was forced apart ... needs time. It doesn't happen overnight."

Reunited Germany has Europe's strongest economy, and is assuming a growing role in international affairs. But huge problems persist. Unemployment in eastern Germany remains at 14 per cent, and the region relies on government infusions of more than 150bn marks (£55.9bn) annually.

Manfred Stolpe, premier of eastern Germany's Brandenburg state, said in Potsdam: "We did not enter a merged Germany as beggars. Along with the richness of our landscape and culture, we also bring with us hard-working people and experiences that are important for the future."

£11m price-tag placed on dinosaur footprints

ELIZABETH NASH
Ouren, central Portugal

Jurassic dinosaur footprints more than 170 million years old face destruction by mechanical diggers unless a Portuguese quarry-owner receives £11m compensation from the Lisbon government. The tracks, discovered in July last year during routine excavation of the limestone hills in Ouren, have been assessed by palaeontologists as

the longest and best-preserved in the world.

Rui Galinha, whose father started the quarry 35 years ago, parked in the middle of a vast, slightly tilted field of rock and pointed out the footprints that form 20 separate tracks crisscrossing 18 acres. He said: "I would be very sorry if the tracks had to be destroyed, but I have a business to run. I have been waiting 14 months and the government has done nothing. My

company is suffering and I am having to lay off workers."

An American geologist, Martin Lockley, who examined the tracks said: "The site is quite unique in the world for displaying the best examples of dinosaur tracks known anywhere. It is also important because the Middle Jurassic [167-187 million years ago] is a poorly-known epoch in geologic history, akin to the Dark Ages."

Mr Galinha said Ernest

Young, an English property company, valued the site at £11m, so he gave the government an ultimatum: it paid up by the end of August, or he would start digging. He was running out of stone to meet his contractual agreements, and running out of capital to invest in new machinery.

But the Socialist leader, Antonio Guterres, appealed in mid-campaign for Mr Galinha to stay his hand until after the

general election, which his party won. "He promised he would preserve the site but he would have to negotiate the price," Mr Galinha said.

He said villagers in nearby Bairro had built a 10ft model of a dinosaur that stands beside the football pitch, a huge egg by its side. "If the next prime minister doesn't solve this problem soon, they say they're going to take this dinosaur to Lisbon and dump it on his doorstep."



Comic cuts: Dick Tracy was one of 20 cartoon-strip characters to appear on US stamps unveiled at San Francisco's Cartoon Art Museum

Belgium put on austerity diet

RAF CASERT
Associated Press

Brussels — Belgium, forced into a budgetary straitjacket by the European Union, announced austerity measures intended to save 100bn francs (£2bn) in order to stay on course for the EU single currency.

With new taxes and social-security cuts, the Prime Minister, Jean-Luc Dehaene, plans to reduce the 1996 budget deficit to 3 per cent of gross domestic product, a strict requirement for joining a core of EU nations that plan to forge ahead with a single currency in 1999.

The centre-left government slapped new taxes on petrol,

and increased VAT and taxes on savings and some pensions. Health and welfare spending were cut.

The budget also foresees stepping up a fight against tax fraud and plans to sell some government properties — including the embassy in Tokyo.

"We are taking today a decisive step, because the reduction of the deficit to 3 per cent is indispensable for our integration into the European Union and to reduce our debt," Mr Dehaene told parliament.

After spending freely in the 1970s and early 1980s, Belgium has amassed the biggest overall debt in the EU as a percentage of GDP, and has been

trying for years to curb it. Mr Dehaene said he overall debt reduction was imperative but it was still expected to stand at 131.1 per cent of GDP next year, only marginally down from a projected 142.2 per cent in 1995.

In an effort to stimulate job-creation, Mr Dehaene also said the government will waive employer contributions to salaries up to 60,000 francs (£1,350) a month.

The government hopes the move will cut the number of jobless by 27,000 in 1999, after an expected rise of 1.30 in 1995. Some 630,000 people or 14.9 per cent of the population were without work in August.

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LOOKING
WORK ABRO

The military junta may have a dismal rights record, but it is tackling the burgeoning narcotics trade, David Orr reports from Kano

Nigeria braced for war with drug lords

The woman stood before the general, her gaze downcast, her bare feet shackled. She was heavily built, in her late forties, and her face was blotchy and unhealthy-looking.

Mama Laide, as she was known among local traders, had been arrested at Kano airport. Customs officials had found 550g of cocaine concealed in her hair. According to her ticket, she was bound for Amsterdam, although her passport also contained visas for Switzerland and Britain.

"Look up so people can see you," growled General Musa Bamaayi, head of the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). "How many children do you have?" Glancing nervously towards where the general sat, the woman replied that she had eight children.

"Why didn't you give the drugs to your own children first, instead of taking them abroad for other people to become addicted to?" he asked. But the woman had nothing more to say. With a wave of his hand, he gestured for her to be led away.

It was a day of triumph for General Bamaayi. He had paraded a convicted drug courier before the assembled Kano state officials, army officers and policemen. He had presided over an impressive little spectacle: the burning of 700kg of cannabis, heroin and cocaine seized in Kano state, northern Nigeria. The bonfire was still smouldering as the guests sipped their soft drinks and congratulated the general on his tough anti-drugs speech.

Nigeria has a dismal reputation among international drug-control agencies. It is one of only four countries to have been blacklisted by the US for not co-operating in the worldwide fight against drugs: the others are Burma, Syria and Iran. For years Nigeria has been known as a transit point for drugs entering the US and Europe.

Now, it would seem, Nigerians are extending their role in the world drug trade. No longer, anti-drug agencies say, are they simply facilitating the passage of drugs through their country or acting as couriers. They are now heavily involved in trafficking and distribution.

Their range is extensive. It is estimated that 40 per cent of heroin entering the US is smuggled in by Nigerian drug-rings. Nigerians are said to control 80 per cent of drug distribution in Atlanta and several other cities with large black populations. They are also said to be taking control of drug distribution in many parts of England, especially in the north-west.

One foreign drugs expert based in Lagos says that Nigerian operators are taking on the cartels in Colombia, Brazil and Turkey.

"Nigerians now have the worst reputation for drug-trafficking of any nationality worldwide," says Antonio Mazzitelli of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). "The Nigerians are business people and they're very good at it. Before they were content to be employed, now they're employers themselves. They buy directly

from a producer in Latin America, ship directly to the UK and sell it on the streets."

What makes it particularly difficult to break up the Nigerian drug-rings is their flexible structure: a trafficker can work for one drug baron one week then switch to another "firm" the following week.

The web of ethnic ties which binds this loosely connected fraternity is well-nigh impenetrable from the outside. "Trying to stamp out Nigerian drug-trafficking," Mr Mazzitelli says, "is like trying to make a piece of jelly stick to the wall."

Despite the military government's appalling record on instituting reforms, the Nigerian authorities appear to take the drug issue seriously. Already Nigeria has lost millions of

dollars of American aid because of the blacklisting. Two years ago the NDLEA, known to be riddled with corruption, was shaken up. Earlier this year it was granted extra powers, enabling it to investigate and seize bank accounts suspected of holding laundered drug money.

International drug-control experts do not believe there is evidence of direct involvement in the trade by the military government. Corruption, however, is endemic in Nigerian society, and co-operation between political figures and drug barons cannot be ruled out. According to diplomatic sources in Lagos, General Bamaayi has stood on so many high-ranking toes that pressure is growing inside the government for his removal.



Drugs bonfire: A soldier watches seized cocaine, cannabis and heroin being burned

Photograph: David Orr

Troops foil coup in Sierra Leone

CHRISTO JOHNSON
Reuters

Freetown — Troops loyal to Sierra Leone's military government foiled a coup attempt yesterday and six officers were arrested, military sources said.

A Western diplomat and residents of Freetown, the capital, reported heavy gunfire in the early hours.

"The government in the early hours with loyal forces foiled a coup plot in which six officers have been arrested and detained at the central prison," one officer said. Earlier, senior officials at Freetown's Pademba road Central Prison said six army officers had been arrested and brought to the jail, accused of plotting a coup.

Freetown was calm but the road to the prison was sealed off and military guards around it strengthened. Residents said they heard sustained gunfire from the direction of the military headquarters.

Sources close to the government of Captain Valentine Strasser, which took power in a coup in 1992 and is fighting rebels, predicted more arrests. Military sources said heavy fighting was raging around the southern provincial capital, Bo. They said South African mercenaries using helicopter gunships were helping government troops to retake four townships in the area seized by rebels last week.

Bo residents said fighting was raging for the third day, with the Revolutionary United Front rebels putting up stiff resistance. Freetown residents said fighter jets flew sorties from the airport but that these looked different from Nigerian warplanes backing the army in the civil war which erupted in 1991.

The government hired the South Africans to train its troops after rebels came close to the capital in May. Their intervention has given the army the initiative in the fighting.

Ivory Coast to hold poll in spite of riots

THALIA GRIFFITHS
Reuters

Abidjan — Ivory Coast's President, Henri Konan Bedie, told opposition leaders yesterday there was no question of postponing presidential elections due in three weeks, despite violent protests which shook the country this week. "I will not go back on the electoral law," he told about 90 representatives of political parties.

Mr Bedie, himself a candidate in the 22 October poll, attacked opposition leaders for calling protests on Monday in which at least three people were killed. The opposition wants the government to withdraw a new electoral law which prevents the former prime minister, Alassane Ouattara, from standing for president in the election.

It also wants an independent electoral commission to oversee

the presidential ballot and parliamentary and municipal elections in November and December.

"The implementation of these reforms requires the postponement of the elections," said Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the main opposition party, the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI).

Djerry Kobina, whose Rally of the Republicans picked Mr Ouattara as their presidential candidate in July, has also called for a postponement.

Mr Gbagbo has refused to register his candidacy for the presidential poll, saying the vote cannot be free under the conditions set by Mr Bedie.

At least three people were killed and several wounded in protests against the electoral law on Monday. Protesters in the outskirts of Abidjan threw up barricades, set fire to cars and stoned police, who responded with tear-gas.

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obituaries / gazette

Mollie Harris

Martha Woodford was a village shopkeeper and an archetypal mistress of gossip. There was nothing that she did not know about her village and, if she was often wrong in what she thought she knew, the free market that is village gossip soon put her right. She had a real country inquisitiveness: she never let a red herring go.

The shop was in Ambridge, six miles south of Bournemouth, in Dorsetshire, the home country of the Radio 4 series *The Archers*. To call Ambridge a "fictional" place is to plunge into a logical fallacy. On Monday to Friday between the times of 1.40 and 1.55pm or 7.05 and 7.20pm (10.15-11.15am for a long lie on Sundays) Ambridge is a far more dependable world than any in non-fiction. Since 1951, when the "everyday story of country folk" was first broadcast, Ambridge has developed its own mythic, separate existence. Writers, actors, producers come and go, but nothing can stop the *vo-et-vient* at the Bull, the pouring of tea at Brookfield, the ceaseless squabbles at Grange Farm.

Martha Woodford was the village shopkeeper. Mollie Harris was Martha Woodford. She joined the series in 1970, creating the part of Martha, widow of Herbert Lily, the postman at Penny Hassell, up the road from Ambridge beyond Lake Hill. Two years later, at the age of 50, on Christmas Day 1972, Martha married Joby Woodford, an amiable and illiterate woodman. He it was who insisted that she take the job in the shop-cum-post-office as the employee of Jack Woolley, the local entrepreneur, proprietor of the *Borchester Echo* and owner of the Grey Gables Country Club.

Martha became if not a leading then a central character in the *Archers* story, especially so after the death of Joby, when



Harris: Martha in *The Archers*

she attracted the attentions of the roguish Joe Grundy and the down-on-his-luck Colonel Danby. The mechanics of soap writing demand regular establishing scenes in the pub, the wine bar, the shop, and there in the shop, amidst the village maelstrom, bright, decent, invertebrate gossip, always appeared Martha, her ripe voice the very spirit of country reassurance.

Jack Woolley tried to retire her once, in 1988; it was thought that she was losing her grip on the figures, that she was at a loss with VAT. But she would not be eliminated. She went part-time, sharing her duties with the stalwart Betty Tucker, martyr to a milkman husband. Only five weeks ago Martha was getting Neil Carter, the pigman turned feed rep, into trouble with his wife the ex-con Susan by talking out of turn behind the counter.

Now Mollie Harris has died. What will happen to Martha Woodford? A BBC spokesman yesterday revealed the scriptwriters' helplessness in the face of such events, where the two battling realities of life and soap-life cross. "It is our practice," he said, "to discuss this with the family as and when appropriate." By the family, he meant not the *Archers*, or the Woodfords (Martha left no children), but the Harris.

"There is no question," he added, "of recasting the part."

James Fergusson

Mollie Harris had another life outside *The Archers*, writes Hugo Brunner. Her first book of autobiography, *A Kind of Magic*, recounting her childhood in West Oxfordshire, was published in 1969, the year before she joined the series. And she had by then already made a name for herself as a writer and broadcaster on rural matters in the south Midlands.

In the post-war years she wrote and contributed to programmes including *In The Country*, presented by Phil Drabble on the Midlands Home Service, and *The Countryside*. She was also one of the first voices on BBC Radio Oxford when it started broadcasting, and for a number of years she delighted listeners with her tales of the Oxfordshire country.

Her second book of memoirs, *Another Kind of Magic*, appeared in 1971, and the third, *The Green Years*, in 1976. All three were reissued this year as a trilogy, under the title *All Kinds of Magic*.

She was born Mollie Woodley, in Duckington, near Witney, in 1913, and brought up in what she described as "happy poverty". But nobody who met her in later life could have guessed that she had been born before the First World War. She looked much younger than her years, and took care to conceal her age from her acquaintances. Although brought up at Duckington, she lived for most of her life in Eynsham nearby, immortalising it in *From Acre End: a portrait of a village* (1982). Her husband, Ginger Harris, was a central heating engineer, who worked for Aldens, in Oxford. He died in 1982, and they leave a son, Peter.

Mollie Harris's autobiographical works form the heart of her oeuvre but she was also the prolific author of illustrated books on local crafts and topography, including *Where the Windmills Flow* (1989) and *Wychwood: the secret Cotswold forest* (1991), both illustrated with paintings by her cousin Gary Woodley. A great maker of country wines, from fruits, parsley or elderflower, she passed on her experience in *A Drop of Wine* (1983). Her very special enthusiasm for traditional sanitation was displayed in *Cotswold Privies* (1984) and *Privies Galore* (1990), and in two exhibitions at Cogges Museum, Witney, which she organised and launched in style.

She was slightly above average height, an ebullient figure, fond of dogs (she is survived by her spaniel Fedora), and a great walker, recounting her enthusiasm in *The Magic of the Cotswold Way* (1987).

She lectured and was a tremendous promoter of her own books. She used to buy them in quantity from her publishers and sell them at the end of her talks. She was a born public speaker, but for her writing books effectively convey her charm and vivacity.

For years she raised money for the Imperial Cancer Campaign by means of sales in Eynsham, first in her garage and, when the events grew too large for it, in the local Women's Institute hall, often opened by one of her colleagues on *The Archers*.

Mollie Woodley, writer, broadcaster, actress: born Duckington, Oxfordshire 23 June 1913; married 1937 Ginger Harris (died 1982; one son); died Oxford 2 October 1995.



Eastwood and his chickens: his company, J.B. Eastwood Ltd, supplied some 10 per cent of the British chicken and egg market. He sold it in 1978 to Imperial Tobacco

Sir John Eastwood

John Eastwood developed the largest integrated chicken- and egg-producing company in the world, transformed chicken from the cheapest of common meats to the cheapest and initiated a decline in the price of eggs which, in real terms, still continues.

Jack Eastwood was born in 1909, the son of William and Elizabeth Townroe Eastwood. He left Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Mansfield, at the age of 16 on the understanding that his grandfather had bought a small farm and that he would be able to work on it. But the deal fell through and instead he joined the family's civil engineering business, Adam Eastwood & Sons, started by his grandfather, who had migrated from Yorkshire to work as a carpenter on the fifth Duke of Portland's extensions to Welbeck Abbey, near Worksop.

By the time he was 21, Eastwood was put in charge of the company's biggest contract, installing sewerage at Romford, Essex. When it was finished and he had married his childhood sweetheart, Constance Tilley, Eastwood announced he intended to take a farm in Essex.

His father responded by buying the substantial Belle Eau Park Farm, in Bilsthorpe, to attract him back home.

Eastwood then became a farmer as well as helping with the civil engineering business, and his wife developed poultry units at Bilsthorpe which became large enough to attract local attention. They included some thousands of turkeys for Christmas and, eventually, 3,000 laying hens in homemade cages.

Following the end of the Second World War, the Nottinghamshire Agricultural Executive Committee chose John Eastwood to reclaim for farming the area of Rufford Park, on the edge of Sherwood Forest, from its wartime military use. This set him on the track of making light sandland fertile with the use of animal manures, originally using manure from a 3,000-sow pig unit.

By 1956, his attention had been caught by broiler chickens as a means of turning home-grown cereals into a higher value product to sell. His first broiler houses were fitted with

his own design of automatic feeder, the first in Britain, and he was delighted with the margins left by the chickens, which finished up at 4lb in only 11 weeks.

He multiplied the houses, increased their size and developed a 3,000-ton-per-week feeding-stuffs mill at Belle Eau Park, thought to be the largest in Britain at the time. A chicken-packing plant was incorporated and the plan was to repeat the pattern of mill, packing plant and broiler houses in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, North Yorkshire and Fife. However, planning permission was refused for these sites elsewhere in Britain although eventually there were 11,000 acres devoted to the business.

The chicken business was run by the company set up in 1945, J.B. Eastwood Ltd, which went public in 1959, with Eastwood advising all his many friends to buy shares rather than invest in their own farms. Egg units were added to the existing broiler units from 1963 and Eastwood came close to sup-

plying 10 per cent of the national market for both chickens and eggs. He sold the poultry business for some £40m to Imperial Tobacco in 1978 and also sold his private Thorganby Estate, south of York, for £4m at about the same time.

Apart from producing cheaper chickens and eggs, and cheaper products which competed with them, Eastwood showed the way to integration in farming. His poultry business had buildings built by his civil engineering business, the farms themselves produced some of the feed through the company's own mills. Eventually he moved into marketing as well, taking over a large meat-importing business for the purpose.

Eastwood had begun supporting charitable works in west Nottinghamshire from early in the days of the expanded poultry business. He had a particular sympathy with the coal miners which endured from the days of the 1926 General Strike, and had taken many of them to work on the Romford contract for Adam Eastwood & Sons.

He was three times president of the Newark and Nottinghamshire Agricultural Show and provided the society with a number of large buildings as well as funds to encourage other aspects of the show. He was knighted in 1975 and appointed a deputy lieutenant of Nottinghamshire in 1981.

At various times, he was an important benefactor to the Farmers' Club in London, the Royal Agricultural Society in Warwickshire and the Glyndebourne Opera, in Sussex. He became virtually blind in his early sixties and this extended his charitable works into new fields, including the establishment of talking newspapers in his home county.

C. David Edgar

John Beatty Eastwood, farmer: born 9 January 1909; founder, W. & J.B. Eastwood Ltd 1945; chairman, Adam Eastwood & Sons Ltd 1946-95; Kt 1975; married 1929 Constance Tilley (died 1981; two daughters), 1983 Mrs Joan McGowan (died 1986); died Rufford, Nottinghamshire 6 August 1995.

Kenneth Parker

Kenneth Parker will be remembered for the outstanding contributions he made as head of the Police Department of the Home Office and Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District in the 1960s and early 1970s, times of thorough reorganisation of the police force.

When Parker became head of the Police Department in 1961, the report of the Royal Commission on the Police was about to be received, and it fell to him to make use of the commission's recommendations in supervising preparations for the Police Act of 1964 which provided a statutory framework for the police service which has remained largely unchanged to the present day. It was a task, involving extensive negotiations with police authorities, chief officers and police associations, for which Parker had both the

temperament and the capacity for hard work to make successful. Over the same period much was to be done in establishing a new Police College at Bramshill, in Hampshire, linked to the introduction of university places for police officers.

The arrival in 1965 of Roy Jenkins as Home Secretary brought further important developments, notably the reduction by amalgamation of more than 100 police forces to fewer than 50, which again was completed successfully after careful planning and preparation under Parker's supervision.

A new police service had thus already begun to emerge when Parker was appointed Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District in 1967. New organisational changes were urgently needed and it was not long before Parker succeeded,

with the approval of the Home Secretary and Sir John Waldron, the Commissioner, in implementing co-ordination of the responsibilities of the police and civil staff which had previously operated under separate offices. Parker became chief administrative officer in the force, reporting directly to the commissioner, while retaining statutory responsibility to the Home Secretary and Parliament as Accounting Officer for the finances of the force.

A new approach was thereby introduced to the general management of the Metropolitan Police with Parker, in his extended role, increasingly associated with policies affecting the force as a whole. There were serious issues to be faced, and following Sir Robert Mark's appointment as Deputy Commissioner and later as Com-

missioner, Mark and Parker were in ever-growing harmony in formulation of policies to start putting matters right.

Much was achieved during Parker's seven years as Receiver, to which Mark gave generous recognition in his annual report to the Home Secretary in 1974 following Parker's retirement, concluding: "No Commissioner can ever have received more willing and valuable help from a Receiver. Few departures from Scotland Yard can have been regretted so much or with such good cause."

Parker's early years had been much like those of others obtaining entry to the higher grades of the Home Civil Service. Leaving Tottenham Grammar School, in north London, as head boy with a scholarship for St John's College, Cambridge, he took a double First

in history and entered the Home Office at the age of 22. But what followed brought distinctive and unusual features.

The first was that preparations for the Second World War took Parker into the new field of Civil Defence, leading to the headquarters of the London Civil Defence Region as London came under attack. There he made his mark with Sir Ernest Gowers, the Senior Regional Commissioner, followed after the war by selection for the Imperial Defence College and working with Sir Sidney Kirkman (Montgomery's military commander) in the Civil Defence Department of the Home Office.

When Parker retired in 1974 he was asked to take a role of identifying officers of promise for higher training at the Police College, and he never lost a

most close interest in developments in the service.

Much more made up the man than success in official duties. Those who worked with Parker remember particularly his integrity, which was accompanied by a most equitable temperament and lively sense of humour. Advice was always kindly given to those who sought it, and only the imprudent did not heed his words.

No one who knew Kenneth Parker well ever thinks of him without also thinking of his wife Freda, his support for 37 years. At their home at Kew - itself after shelf of books on the ground floor and rows of fine French wines in the cellar - men and women from different walks and levels of life gathered often for generous hospitality and much enjoyment.

R. A. James



Parker: reorganising the police

Kenneth Alfred Lamport Parker, civil servant: born 1 April 1912; Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Home Office 1955-57; Head of Police Department 1961-66; CB 1959; Receiver for the Metropolitan Police 1967-74; married 1938 Freda Sikcock (one son, one daughter); died 11 September 1995.

Royce England

Further to your obituary of Royce England [by Austin Attewell, 16 September], Royce spoke and supported Esperanto, writes Professor John Wells.

It was when I stayed overnight at his Three Poplars youth hostel as a 16-year-old that he recruited me by selling me an introductory booklet. I went on to compile the standard two-way English-Esperanto dictionary and in the course to become President of the World Esperanto Association.

Margaret Gorman Cahill, died Bowie, Maryland 1 October, aged 90. Winner in 1921 of the first Miss America beauty contest. Her prize was a 3ft-long golden mermaid.

BIRTHS

BAILEY: On 16 September 1995, to Anne (nee Stogdale) and Mark, a daughter, Matilda Lucy Bailey.
FITZSIMONS: On 28 September 1995, in Cambridge, to Philippa and Gerard, a daughter, Beatrice Louise, a sister for Olivia and Harriet.
LAWSON: On 28 September 1995, at Materie Grand-Duchesse Charlotte, Luxembourg, to Patricia (nee Newson) and Gary, a daughter, Sophie Elizabeth.
LEWIS: On 28 September, to Paul and Alison, a beautiful daughter, Caitlin Anne Micklethorp.
ROGERSON: see FITZSIMONS.

DEATHS

AUSTIN: Desmond Harold Fryer. Died suddenly, on 27 September, aged 69. His ashes will be placed next to his dear wife, Colette, in Highgate West Cemetery. He will be greatly missed by his two sons, Nick and Michael, his brother David, and his family and friends. The funeral will take place at Golders Green Crematorium, Hoop Lane, on Friday 6 October at 2pm.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

Donations to Cancer Research Fund c/o Leventhal & Sons, 0181-455 4992.
BELL: Anthony Douglas, physician. Husband of Frances, father of Diana, Andrew and Tom. Died at West Langham, Sunday, October 2, 1995, at 82. In General Practice, Rothbury, Northumberland, 1946-1976.

DEAN: On 1 October 1995, Stephen George Pollard, of Blackheath, London SE1, aged 55. Much-loved husband of Nancy, father of Guy and Jessica, and brother of Christopher. Funeral service at 2pm, Monday 9 October at St John's Church, St John's Park, Blackheath, London SE3.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2016.

Birthdays

Professor Richard Batchelor, Professor Emeritus of Imperial College, Royal Postgraduate School, Hammersmith Hospital, 64 Lord Blake, former government minister, 73; Sir Neville Bowman-Shaw, chairman, Boss Trucks Ltd, 63; Miss Jackie Collins, author, 58; Sir Terence Conran, chairman, Conran Shop, 64; Air Chief Marshal Sir Kenneth Cress, 84; Mr Basil D'Oliveira, cricketer, 64; Mr Henry Greenwood MP, 61; Dr F. Dudley Hart, rheumatologist, 86; Mr Charles Heston, actor, 71; Sir John Hogg, former deputy chairman, Williams and Glyn's Bank, 83; Mr Frank Keating, sports journalist, 58.

Mr John McFall MP, 51; Mr Richard Martin, former vice-chairman, Allied-Lyons, 63; Mr Tony Men, snooker champion, 35; Sir Hector Monro MP, 73; Dr Gareth Owen, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Wales, 72; Mr Gavin Pritchard-Gordon, racehorse trainer, 50; Mr Giles Radice MP, 59; Miss Ann Rice, television presenter, 57; Mr John Rutherford, rugby footballer, 40; The Right Rev Dr Richard Say, former Bishop of Rochester, 81; Mr Marcus Seitchell, Surgeon-Gynaecologist to the Queen, 54; Sir George Sheldon, former High Court judge, 82; Sir James Spicer MP, 70; Miss Ann Widdicombe MP, Minister of State, Home Office, 48.

Anniversaries

Births: Lucas Cranach the Elder (Lucas Müller), painter, 1473; Lucas Cranach the Younger, painter, 1515; Richard Cromwell, Lord Protector, 1626; Giambattista Piranesi, engraver, 1720; François-Pierre Guillaume Guizot, historian and statesman, 1787; Alfred Damon Rymon, writer and journalist, 1884; Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, sculptor, 1891; Buster Keaton (Joseph Francis Keaton), comedian, 1895; Deaths: Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, painter, 1669; John Rennie, civil engineer, 1821; "Pansy" Elias H. Hendon, cricketer, 1902; Janis Joplin, rock singer, 1970. On this day: Peterborough Cathedral was consecrated, 1238; Miles Coverdale's translation of the Bible was published, 1535; the Boys Brigade was founded by Sir William Smith, 1883; the first public escalator was opened, at Bank Court underground station, 1911; 600 French soldiers lost their lives when the French cruiser *Calliope* was torpedoed in the Mediterranean, 1916; Mrs Rebecca Ann Laffoon, first African American woman in the US Senate, 1922; the world's first artificial satellite, *Sputnik 1*, was launched by the Soviet Union, 1957; the first transatlantic passenger jet service started operating, 1958; the first close-up pictures of the moon were made from the *Soviet Lunik III*, 1959; Pope Paul VI became the first pope to visit America when he landed at New York, 1965. Today is the Feast Day of St Ammon, St Francis of Assisi and St Petronius of Bologna. Today is also Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

Lectures
National Gallery: Mani Grifflin, before Impressionism (1) artists in exile; Deixis, Ovid, *Among the Scythians*, 1921; Victoria and Albert Museum: Michael Soodin, "The Rule of Bats", 2.30pm.
Tate Gallery: Michael Grossbard, "Christian Boltanski and the Politics of Memory", 1pm.
British Museum: Shelly Mandani, "Art and Literature in Umanzo's World", 1.15pm.
Slade School of Fine Art, London WC1: Jeff Wall, "On Kawara, Monochrome Painting and Photography", 6pm.
Gresham College (at Kingsway College, London WC1): Professor Ian Stewart, "Fagot's Fretful Flauto: the unusual geometry of musical scales", 5.30pm.

Dinners
Royal Overseas League
Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare was the guest of honour and speaker at the Members' Dinner of the Royal Overseas League held yesterday evening at Overseas House, St James's, London SW1. Sir Geoffrey Ellerton, Chairman of the League, presided.

Wills
Sir Edward Walters Senior, of Brechney, Kent, Director-General of the British Iron and Steel Federation 1962-66, left estate valued at £1,856,690 net.
Mrs Margaret Anne Borges, of Colchester, Essex, left estate valued at £4,457,012 net.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Home Office policy on life prisoners unlawful

Regions v Secretary of State for the Home Department, ex parte Norway and others; Queen's Bench Division (Mr Justice Dyson); 28 September 1995

LAW REPORT

4 October 1995

The Home Secretary's policy of not referring discretionary life prisoners' cases to the parole board, save for some compelling reasons, until after the expiration of the tariff or penal periods of their sentences was unreasonable and unlawful.

Mr Justice Dyson declared that the Home Secretary should have referred the applicants' cases to the parole board at such times as would have ensured so far as practicable that their cases were heard by the board immediately on the expiration of the tariff or penal part of their sentences.

In 1976 the five applicants, members of the provisional IRA, were convicted of offences of attempted murder and conspiracy to cause explosions and were sentenced to terms of life imprisonment. Each was notified in 1992 that his tariff period, set for the purposes of retribution and deterrence, was 20 years. On expiry of the tariff period, the parole board would decide whether a further period

should be served if there was a risk to the public.

The Home Secretary refused the applicants' solicitors request to refer the cases to the parole board so that they would be heard immediately on the expiration of the tariff periods in July 1995. When the cases were referred to the board the chairman refused applications for expedition of the hearings and hearings were fixed for December 1995. The applicants applied for judicial review of those decisions.

Edward Fitzgerald QC (B.M. Binberg & Co) for the applicants; Kenneth Parker QC (Treasury Solicitor) for the Home Secretary.

Mr Justice Dyson said that section 34 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 governed the release of discretionary life prisoners. The European Court of Human Rights had held that it was the right of prisoners to be released if there was no longer a risk to the public, and prisoners were entitled under article 5(4) of the European Convention on Human Rights to a judicial determination of the question of risk.

The Home Secretary ac-

cepted that he had a discretion to refer cases to the board before the expiration of the tariff period but the policy under section 34 was not to refer cases until after the expiration of the tariff period unless there was a compelling reason, such as the case of a terminally ill prisoner, and contended that a hearing 23 weeks later satisfied the requirements of domestic and European Convention law.

That policy was unreasonable and therefore unlawful. In the cases of prisoners who were no longer dangerous and who ought to be released on the expiry of their tariff periods, the policy produced results which were manifestly unjust. The implementation of the policy meant that prisoners who were judged no longer dangerous were required to serve sentences, approximately six months longer than they should.

The policy flouted the principles of common law and the European Convention. The common law required that a discretionary life prisoner be released after completion of the tariff period unless he contin-

ued to be dangerous. Article 5(4) required a speedy review of the lawfulness of the detention.

Where it was clear that the statutory provision which created the exercise of executive discretion was passed in order to bring domestic law in line with the convention, it would be perverse to hold that, when considering the lawfulness of the exercise of the discretion, the court must ignore the convention.

Nor could the policy be saved by invoking considerations of convenience and pragmatism where what was at stake was the liberty of the subject. It could not be stated too strongly that, once the prisoner had served the tariff period, he had paid the penalty imposed by the court to meet the needs of retribution and deterrence; detention thereafter could not be justified unless the prisoner continued to be dangerous. The ECHR had held that a period of eight weeks delay before a hearing was difficult to reconcile with the notion of "speedy".

However, the decision to refuse expedition of the hearings could not be impugned as irrational or unlawful.

Ying Hai Tan, Barrister

Can the City halt London's drift to the east?

Now that Paul Reichmann is back at Canary Wharf, the capital's geography could shift fast. Paul Valley and John Willcock report

The *jarret d'agneau* was reduced to half-price, a mere £7, as was the *ragout de lotte et coquillages*; even the *filet de boeuf* was only half its usual £17.50 per head. Starched white tablecloths came to Canary Wharf for the first time yesterday with the opening of a Docklands offshoot of the smart West End eatery, the Café Pelican, decked out in its familiar green and gold and Art Deco lighting.

It is a sign of the times, that combination of up-market style and aggressive marketing. For though Pelican's meals may only be half-price for the restaurant's opening week, the war between Canary Wharf and the City of London will last a good deal longer as they recommence the contest to house the main growth in the nation's key financial institutions in the next century.

Canary Wharf, the 4.5 million square foot development featuring the 850ft tower that is Britain's highest building, was the great white hope of the Eighties boom and the great white elephant of the world-wide property crash of the early Nineties, when the Reichmann brothers and their Olympia & York company suffered simultaneous property disasters in New York, Toronto and London.

Canary Wharf went into administration in 1992 and was run by the 11 banks from whom the Reichmanns had borrowed until Monday, when a consortium of investors led by one of the brothers, Paul Reichmann, bought the development for a reported £800m. City analysts are clear about one thing: The gentleman's agreement reached when the banks called the shots – that the Docklands development would not poach big banks and finance houses from the Square Mile – is off.

Reichmann is noted for his aggressive and adventurous deals to lure new tenants from the City, often involving the purchase of the leases on their old premises or tempting side-agreements on Manhattan properties in the Reichmann empire.

But one of the other key players in the consortium is Michael Price, an American financier who is known as one of the world's most pugnacious investors. Price has a vigorously interventionist track record of buying into troubled or undervalued situations, shaking the business with considerable force, and then selling at a vast profit – he bought one semi-bankrupt drug company for \$9m, turned it inside out, and sold it not long after for \$600m. The gloves will now come off in the fight between Canary Wharf and the City.

Things had already started to move in 1993 under Sir Peter Levine, former head of procurement at the Ministry of Defence, who became head of the new Canary Wharf Company when the banks took over from the administrators. Under his tutelage Canary Wharf has added to its client list the Personal Investment Authority (the Government's official personal finance watchdog) and the first European Union body to be based

London-wide moves

From outside the City of London: London Underground (from Victoria), CS First Boston (from West End), Euroland (from Aldwych), Mirror Group (from Holborn), Tesco (from Knightsbridge), The Telegraph (from Docklands).

Eastward Ho! The mass exodus to Canary Wharf

Possible moves

Others who may move to the Wharf: Citibank (from various sites), other branches of BZW (from City), ABN Amro/Boere Goevt (from City), HSBC/Midland (from City), London International Financial Futures Exchange (from City), West Deutsche Landesbank (from City).

Migrating businesses

From City to Canary Wharf: Bear Stearns International, BZW, Credit Suisse, The Independent, Morgan Stanley UK Group, Ogilvy & Mather. In the City rent is up to £32 per sq ft, but a hefty service charge and rates – higher on older buildings – add up to £30. Larger sites are in demand (hence Canary Wharf's attraction). New developments with this in mind include Winchester House (650,000 sq ft) and Baltic Exchange (500,000 sq ft).

Jubilee Line extension

From 1998, Wharf workers will be able to get to London Bridge in 7 minutes.

Limehouse Link

A four-lane highway, opened in May 1993, which links Tower Hill to Canary Wharf. Previously, roads became very congested during rush hour.

Docklanders

68,000 people live in Docklands; 65,800 work there. Docklanders and commuters now enjoy the beginnings of a symbiotic relationship, though this hasn't always been so. In the mid-80s building labour, low-skilled and high-income workers were drafted in from outside the borough. But in 1987, Tower Hamlets council set up a construction training scheme with the Canary Wharf Development Company, designed to create employment for local people. Some companies based in Canary Wharf have been involved in community projects.

Docklands Light Railway

Thatcher's baby has grown up to be a problem child. Additions to the railway, which opened in 1987, have been expensive and it is not designed to carry the numbers of people who use it. Extension of the Jubilee Line might make the railway redundant.

Canary Wharf

Ships once unloaded imports from the Canaries here. Now trains disgorge thousands of commuters a day. 13,000 people work in 10 office buildings. A third of the complex – 45 million sq ft of office space – has been constructed. First tenants arrived in 1991 and 75 per cent of space has been leased. Quoted rents from £18-£25 per sq ft, although the top 10 floors of the tower, which aren't being leased yet, will be more expensive. Service charge and rates add £9 to the price.

The Tower

An 800-ft, 50-floor monolith, it is the tallest building in Britain and Europe's highest office block. It is designed to sway 13 3/4" in strong winds. No expense was spared on plush decor: 90,000 sq ft of Italian and Guatemalan marble line the 38-ft high lobby.

Amenities

A private health club panders to executive whims. The number of shops and restaurants has doubled over the past year. Restaurants and bars sprout overnight: a Japanese noodle bar is eagerly awaited. Shops range from the prosaic – Boots, dry cleaners, newsagents – to the posh – Jaeger Man, Lords Formal Wear. Recent openings suggest business is booming.

Future development

Eight million sq ft of office, retail and residential buildings planned.

in Britain, the European Medicines Evaluation Agency.

More recently the investment bank BZW, the merchant banking arm of Barclays, announced a £200m move of some of its 2,500 employees to the Isle of Dogs development, where it will join the oil multinational, Tereco, the investment bank Morgan Stanley, the British arm of Credit Suisse, the advertising group Ogilvy & Mather, a large part of London Underground's administration and eight national newspapers including the *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Independent*. Sir Peter recently did a tour of the Far East in an attempt to persuade more corporations, including Samsung in Korea, to base their European headquarters at Canary Wharf.

"We're very pleased," said Sir Peter, who has been asked by Reichmann to stay on as chief executive. "This development was valued at £50m two years ago, so to go for a price of around £800m is not bad."

The City affects to be less impressed. Michael Cassidy, chairman of the policy and resources committee of the Corporation of London, yesterday firmly played down the significance of the Reichmann deal. "Whether the banks own Canary Wharf or Mr Reichmann owns it doesn't change our stance," he complains bitterly of Canary Wharf's recent "poaching" of City institutions and was clearly

stung when parts of BZW decided in the spring to relocate from the City eastwards to Canary Wharf "without even talking to us".

Now Cassidy is bracing himself for a new phase of the battle. Canary Wharf currently offers almost half the rent and service-charge package of the City, and is holding out the inducement of substantial rent-free periods – as long as two years. For this, tenants are locked into long leases.

At stake in the forthcoming struggle are at least six investment banks looking for vast new offices. New technology and systems mean they all need big dealing floors. The problem is that the City has few sites to build the new blocks required, whereas Canary Wharf can build as big as required, and to the customer's specification. Cassidy counters, in defence of the City: "We can't compete on cost with Canary Wharf, but we have quality of environment, proximity to all the key players and transport access, particularly to Heathrow. And you can walk from meeting to meeting in the City – Canary Wharf has still some way to go."

Indeed, while the Docklands Light Railway has improved considerably since it was installed, it is still subject to irritating delays. And although access by road has been transformed since the opening of the £450m Limehouse Link tunnel, the island will have to wait until 1998 – or 1999, say pessimists

– for the opening of the Jubilee Line extension which will link it directly to the London Underground. Those who built a similar large-scale office development at La Défense outside Paris took the precaution of installing the transport infrastructure before anything else.

Will the eastward drift end in Docklands? Thirteen years ago, when Michael Heseltine was Environment Secretary, he set up the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) to promote a grander scheme along a 40-mile corridor, across "a bead of towns" strung beside the Channel tunnel high-speed rail link. The dream of Thames Gateway – Hezragrad, as it was irreverently dubbed – would cover six east London boroughs which had lost nearly 60,000 jobs between 1981 and 1991. "Docklands writ large," said Mr Heseltine's adviser, Peter Hall, professor of Planning at University College, London.

More recently Michael Howard, another Environment Secretary, spoke of a "golden corridor" up to 30 miles long on both sides of the Thames and announced a £4.5bn plan for government investment in a new road and rail link which would bring 100,000 new jobs and the same number of homes to the region. We shall see.

Certainly the Jubilee Line is to be extended beyond Canary Wharf to the part of Greenwich which occu-

pies the blasted dockland wastes inside the next great meander to the east. The LDDC is to concentrate now on developing the Royal Docks, a huge area to the east of Canary Wharf, the size of the West End and the City put together.

Three big projects are planned, according to Michael Pickard, chairman of the LDDC, to "increase the pull of the East End to investors". First is an urban village being developed by the building group Wimpey. Second, the corporation is planning an exhibition centre, and third there is a university of technology and a science park.

But the LDDC is soon to be wound up by fiat of the Government, leaving the development of the region to the combined influences of the market and a group of left-wing councils not traditionally friendly to new business development. "Never in 100 years would the Docklands have been regenerated if it had been left to the local authorities," says Pickard.

None of which will bother the Reichmann consortium. So far only one-third of Canary Wharf has been built. Planning permission exists for another 8 million square feet and the foundations – the most time-consuming part of a new building – are already laid. It will take months, not years, to throw up the rest. That is when the money will really start to roll in.

Additional reporting by Scott Hughes.

Dordogne Diary

ANGELA LAMBERT

The jaunty notes of Ride-A-Cock-Horse herald my most reliable source of information here in rural France: the BBC World Service at seven o'clock Greenwich Mean Time most mornings. It is salutary to hear the news according to global rather than national, let alone tabloid, priorities. Princess Diana is never mentioned, nor are footballers, film stars, charismatic healers or media moguls. It is austere, considered and finely balanced.

On Monday, news of the detonation of the second French nuclear test explosion – five times more powerful than last month's – led the bulletin, followed by the verdict in the trial of the terrorists who bombed the World Trade Centre in New York, and an earthquake in western Turkey. The first mention of British news – the start of the Labour Party conference – came well below the Portuguese elections in order of significance.

In the bars and cafés of this south-easternmost corner of the Dordogne they are far less excited about the second nuclear test than the fact that Eric Cantona's reappearance on the pitch after his nine-month ban was reputedly greeted with the singing of the "Marseillaise". When President Chirac appeared on French television to debate the nuclear issue, he said only: "There is no changing my mind." Secretly, many French admire this return to old-style Gaullist obstinacy. They cite the regal manner of Margaret Thatcher in the mid-Eighties, with whom they already compare their new president. His

political popularity but you hear many people say they are wholly in favour of the policy. That France has moved and continues to move to the right is beyond doubt.

There is a third great issue, come to think of it: terrorism. The current wave of attacks by a group that is the more sinister for being nameless – the bombing of the Place de l'Étoile, the Paris metro and the TGV – has left France in the grip of an invisible and all-pervasive fear such as has not been seen on the British mainland since the mid-Seventies. French police have carte blanche to take any necessary measures against terrorism. Since the bombing of the Jewish school in Lyons, schools throughout France are guarded by the police and parking in front of them is prohibited. This applies even in my peaceful village of Grolejac, whose infants' school has a barrier erected outside it.

Our local equivalent of *Time Out* is a newspaper called *L'Essor Sarladais*, or "Going out in Sarlat". It has always been my ambition to appear in its pages, and I have just managed it – twice. First by befriending an abandoned black kitten whom we felt obliged to advertise in the paper's Lost and Found section (the column known as "Nos jolies, nos

peines"). Happily no one has rung up to claim her, so we waste hours watching her prance after butterflies and chase lizards. The French are notoriously unkind to cats and indeed regard most animals as useless unless they work or can be eaten. Our kitten, as though mindful of this, caught a mouse within hours of her arrival and we now have a mouse-free house and an almost lizard-free garden. Rest assured, we have found a good home for her when we leave.

The second burst of media attention came about because my third novel, the first to have been translated into French, was published here three weeks ago. I approached the office of *L'Essor Sarladais* with a copy. The editor (its only member of staff) proved extremely tractable, reproducing the lengthy jacket blurb in its entirety the following week. Now at last local people believe my claim to be *une écrivaine* – although I doubt whether in England the laundrette owner would have asked for a copy, tried to pay me nearly £20 for it, kissed me on both cheeks when I pressed it on her as a gift, and finally insisted that I should in return accept this week's washing free of charge.

It signals a great step towards acceptance when a French person greets you with a handshake, and yet another step when the handshake becomes a kiss. We have patronised the Café Divan in Gourdon – the little town due south of us, just over the departmental border into the Lot – for more than a decade. This year for the first time its elderly waiter, his splendid handlebar moustache curled and twisted upwards at each end and dyed an improbable black, greeted my partner with a handshake. This is the café in which, according to Selma Hastings's biography, the redoubtable Nancy Cunard – eccentric socialite and patron of the arts, in particular black writers and poets of the Thirties and Forties – spent the last months of her life before dying, alone and abandoned, in a hospital outside Paris. The café still has more than a touch of the raffish. A notice in the entrance proclaims: "Café fumeurs. Non-fumeurs acceptés."



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Nicole's killer is still free

On the night of Sunday 12 June 1994 in Brentwood, California someone murdered Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Yesterday, the "not guilty" verdict was read to the courtroom in Los Angeles and OJ Simpson, Nicole's ex-husband, walked free to the cheers of a large crowd, the sound of sobbing could be heard. The grief belonged to Nicole's family, deprived of a judgment that might have ended their suffering.

Many will shake their heads at the verdict, believing that justice has signally failed to be done. They may wonder what - short of video evidence - it would have taken to convict Simpson of the killings. Such feelings must be tempered by two considerations. The first is that only the jury can really know whether the weight of the evidence presented allowed conviction "beyond reasonable doubt". The rest of us are left to speculate.

The second concern is race. When the history of the trial comes to be written it is quite probable that its chroniclers will fix on Detective Mark Fuhrman as the man who swung the case. Fuhrman's testimony was central to the prosecution's case. It was important that he should be accepted by the jury as being above reproach: a conscientious and honest policeman doing his best for justice. And at first that was how he appeared. Then a jury, consisting of nine black people - all of whom will have experienced racism in a city scarred by race - were confronted with compelling evidence that Detective Fuhrman was a liar, a bigot and a racist.

Even before the Fuhrman revelations surfaced, the racial character of the trial had been established in polls showing that

a preponderance of white Americans thought him guilty, while blacks believed that he was probably innocent. To whites it was literally inconceivable that a complex plot could have been hatched amongst Californian law-enforcers to falsely convict a popular sportsman and TV personality. Blacks, with the Rodney King case fresh in their minds, had no such difficulty. With Fuhrman's exposure, any claim that the Los Angeles Police Department could make to putting justice first collapsed in rubble.

So what emerges from all this? There must be some deep misgivings about the nature of the adversarial system of justice, relying as it does on the seeking out of weak points in an argument, rather than in a quest for truth. Then there is the shared but slightly guilty voyeurism, slaked only by the misfortunes of others, and in which the American tabloid press has played a particularly unpleasant and demeaning role.

Many would add the televising of the trial on the debit side of the balance sheet. And it is true that a terrible trivialisation of the deaths of two innocent human beings did result from the theatricality of the process. But would the unconstructed racism of the LAPD have come to light, had the case not been played out before the cameras? Almost certainly not.

Above all, however, the significance of the OJ trial is the terrifying polarisation in US society between Americans of different colours and backgrounds. Whether the jury's verdict is right or wrong, Nicole Simpson's relatives must know that whoever killed her is probably still free because of the racism of the Los Angeles police.

Can Labour find the promised land?

Tony Blair knew what he had to do in Brighton yesterday. After a remarkable year in which he has turned the Labour Party inside out and convinced most of the faithful that the sweater looks better with the seams showing, he had to address the country and talk not about new Labour but about the new Britain he believes a Labour government can construct.

The requirement was for a speech that combined vision, compelling analysis of the country's problems and a credible indication of the policies that will effect the change the country needs.

Mr Blair's Christian social democratic vision was powerfully restated. Socialism, he declared, was not about the state, economics or politics, but about moral purpose. "We aren't simply people set in isolation from each other, face to face with eternity, but members of the same family, community, the same human race. This is my socialism." Even in an atheistic and agnostic age, hearts will be stirred by this. It promises a break with the bleak commercialism of recent years and an optimism about the potential for change without which politics is nothing. Mr Blair's declared journey is towards "a young country" where the eager embrace of new technology and a more effective education system drive forward economic performance and its citizens' sense of fulfilment.

But the more searching question is whether Blair's analysis and his list of mostly familiar policies represents a convincing agenda for creating this new

Britain, the "young country" of his imagination. Here the speech must be judged a failure. What it needed to do was to work through a handful of major policy thoughts and to explain how Labour's distinctive and coherent approach would effect not mild reform but a transformation.

Two examples will make the point. On education, Labour still sounds painfully confused. Is Mr Blair intending to act against the "two classes of state schools" he warned against yesterday? Or does he really think that a harder drive on standards and class sizes will deliver the goods? Equally, his cheeky prime ministerial deal with BT about free connections to the superhighway for public institutions in return for allowing the company to get into the video business raises more questions than it answers. What does it tell us about Labour's view of its relationship with the private sector? Should government tax and regulate (at arm's length) these businesses to protect the consumer's interest? Or should a Labour prime minister be directly pursuing one-off sweetheart deals with captains of industry?

This is the kind of muddle that will become more problematic as Labour sprinkles more policies across the seedbed of the Blair vision. In government it could be disastrous.

No one can doubt Mr Blair's integrity or his ambition. He said yesterday that he was playing not for a single election victory but to put Labour into power for a generation. He still has much work to do.

ANOTHER VIEW Mary Kenny

Calvary of Catholic Ireland

From time immemorial Ireland has been described as a Catholic country that was hopelessly priest-ridden. "They are all Papists by their profession," wrote Edmund Spenser in the 16th century, setting the tone, "but in the same, so blindly and brutishly informed, for the most part, as you would rather think them infidels." For the next 400 years, outsiders have scolded, berated, persecuted, ridiculed and nagged at the Irish for their extraordinary loyalty to the Roman Church and its teachings. Against this barrage of external pressure Catholic Ireland stood firm.

To the priesthood the Irish people gave a very special trust and loyalty. These were men sprung from a peasant order - and, by virtue of their celibacy, immune from the dynastic temptations of placing their sons in positions of power and marrying their daughters off to rich politicians. Whatever the faults of the Irish Catholic priest, he generally observed punctiliously the chastity that he so sternly preached.

Now, suddenly, Catholic Ireland seems to be collapsing from within. In Dublin, the newspapers, radio and television lead editions and bulletins with priestly scandal, priestly sex abuse, and apparent episcopal covering-up of such sins, for sin is what the Irish Catholic church would have called such lapses from the ideal in its heyday.

Some commentators see the root of the crisis in the authoritarianism of the Irish Catholic Church, but my reading of Irish Catholicism material from the past 20 years

leads me to quite a different conclusion. From about the mid-Seventies onwards, the Irish Catholic Church has been increasingly liberal and even left-wing in tone and attitude. Practically every Episcopal letter and statement from the Irish hierarchy since 1978 has taken up the theme (to rephrase John Major) of "understanding a little more and blaming a little less".

It was not because many of the offenders who have brought the Church in Ireland to such a position of shame were dealt with in an "authoritarian" way - but because they were dealt with in a forgiving, molly-coddling, indulgent way - that the problem entered. Cardinal Daly seems to have believed that saying sorry, with a "firm purpose of amendment", was enough to dissolve the offence of paedophilia; a perusal of the devotional literature from Catholic Ireland in the Fifties would show that pardon was withheld from any penitent until moral restitution was fully assured. Saying sorry was not considered to be sufficient for absolution until the post-Vatican II liberalism.

What the Irish Catholic Church needs today is not more democracy - but more authority and a bit more toughness about right and wrong. It needs to keep its nerve, and accept, too, the Calvary it is now facing. Irish Catholicism was forged in suffering and always found renewal through pain. It will do so again: *le cinamh Dé*.

Mary Kenny's study 'Goodbye to Catholic Ireland?' will be published in 1996.

POLICE HQ



I wonder what our sentence is going to be?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

How to prevent tragedy and return Nigeria to democracy

From Mr Zaya Yeebo and others
Sir: On the 35th anniversary of Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule, we would like to add our voice to the growing call for increased pressure on the Nigerian military government to listen to the demands of its people and end the cycle of violence, state terrorism and gross abuse of human rights in that country.

The military junta headed by General Sani Abacha has trampled upon all forms of peaceful opposition in the country and sent most of the pro-democracy movement leadership into jail or exile. In addition, there are hundreds of people in detention under pain of death sentence, life imprisonment and long jail terms on trumped-up charges.

The international community has to help the pro-democracy forces in Nigeria. The regime needs trade, commerce, and diplomatic acceptability to keep it in power. It is amenable to pressures from these quarters. There is much that NGOs, human rights organisations, the British press and well-meaning people in the UK can do to put pressure on the British government, parliament and political parties in this country to achieve a complete isolation of the Abacha regime, and to help the process of return to democratic rule in Nigeria.

Instead of us preparing for the "tragedy waiting to happen", we can prevent it from happening by campaigning and lobbying for: 1. The release of all political detainees without conditions.

2. Restoration of all elected institutions at local, state and national levels, including the presidency.

3. The release of all those serving jail terms, including life, and those suffering the pain of the death sentence over trumped-up charges of attempting to overthrow the government.

4. Isolation of the Abacha regime internationally through mandatory economic sanctions, and diplomatically.

Yours sincerely,
ZAYA YEEBO
Editor, The African
WASA FATTY
Chairman, Africa Research and
Information Bureau
KAYODE PAYEM
Editor, Nigeria Now
NAPOLSON ABDULAI
Editor, Africa World Review
TAJUDEEN ABDUL-RAHEEM
General-Secretary, Pan African
Movement
London, SE1
29 September

From Mr L. T. Robbins
Sir: It is hoped that no one is surprised or encouraged by anything that General Sani Abacha had to say in his Nigerian Independence Day anniversary speech.

Nigeria is a complex country. Of this there is no doubt. It took a transition plan of eight years by the Babangida administration (in which General Abacha was a key player) to put in place all the necessary political paraphernalia required to form 598 local governments, 31 state governors, state legislatures, the federal House of Representatives, the

Senate, etc. (All, incidentally, later dissolved by General Abacha.) So, everything was in place and up and running by the time the presidential elections took place on 12 June 1993. Under the two-party system (the multi-party system had been rejected by the military as "too divisive"), Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party and Alhaji عثمان Tofa of the National Republican Party vied for the presidency. Chief Abiola, having found popular support across all regions, religious, ethnic and occupational groups, secured 58 per cent of the vote in an election recognised as free and fair by national and international observers.

After the election, the military lost its nerve, annulled the election and plunged Nigeria into a downward spiral of corruption and maladministration.

I read with interest last week that it may be possible to travel back in time. Would that we could, for it is this concept that offers Nigerians the only hope they have for a future that encompasses freedom, hope, integrity and dignity. For they must, with the help of Britain, Europe, the US and the Commonwealth, go back to 12 June 1993.

Yours faithfully,
L. T. ROBBINS
Blowick, Staffordshire
2 October

From Mr Neville Linton
Sir: David Orr's interesting article ("Nigeria waits for dictator to speak", 29 September) states that "the Commonwealth human

rights commission recently called for Nigeria's expulsion from the Commonwealth when heads of government meet in New Zealand in November". Presumably he is referring to the just-released report of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative's (CHRI) Mission to Nigeria and, if so, I would like to stress that the Mission has not so recommended.

However, it did suggest the suspension of Nigeria from future Commonwealth official meetings if the Abacha regime did not rapidly commence a credible process of return to democratic order. It should also be noted that the recommendations for sanctions are to be read in tandem with the call on Commonwealth Heads to offer to the Nigerian regime their good offices in helping to broker a transition program acceptable to the pro-democracy forces and to the people of Nigeria.

Given the nature of the Commonwealth relationship, the CHRI does not recommend sanctions lightly. As Chairman Kamal Hossain noted in the foreword to the Mission's report:

"We would not wish to punish Nigerian citizens for the crimes committed by their unselected government. We greatly hope that Commonwealth pressure, following this report, will prove effective in returning Nigeria to democracy."

Sincerely,
NEVILLE LINTON
Member
CHRI Mission to Nigeria
London, SW16

After initial hiccups and teething problems, economic reforms would no doubt generate steady growth and prosperity in the long run. But such prosperity, as the Western experience of the past two decades has amply demonstrated, is likely to be accompanied by fragmentation and atomisation of Indian society leading to moral corruption, permissiveness and social decay. It is the fear of social disintegration, not anti-West xenophobia, which has abetted the virtual collapse of India's economic liberalisation programme.

Yours faithfully,
RANDY SINGH BAINS
Gants Hill, Essex
1 October

Bank of the Thames. This is incorrect. At no time has the society been consulted or involved in any way with this project.

Yours faithfully,
JUDITH HARVEY-ROGERS
Secretary
The Churchill Society
Ipswich,
Suffolk
25 September

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

Drawbacks of the metric system

From Mr Charles Fyffe
Sir: Whether we want it or not, we are going to be saddled with the metric system. However, Tom Wilkie ("Drop your feet and use your fingers", 30 September), in trying to persuade us that it is a Good Thing, perhaps unwittingly blows the gaff when he writes "we have 10 fingers and therefore count in tens." Quite: the metric system was devised for a backward, uneducated, newly liberated peasantry. Sophisticated societies, such as industrialised Britain, had a more sensible system that needed regularising, not abolishing.

It's typical of metric that its foundation, supposedly a "natural" distance, turned out to be wrongly calculated so that the metre finished up, like the yard, as an arbitrarily decided length. As the kilogram was supposed to be the weight of 1,000cc of pure water, one would expect the cc and the centilitre to be the same, but they are not. I have found three standards for the metre: one given by Dr Wilkie, one based on the wavelength of the red line in cadmium, and one, like the standard yard at the Board of Trade, on a metal bar at Sevres. The standard Imperial lengths are, or were, set in the wall on the north side of Trafalgar Square.

Given a choice between a man in a white coat and a lab-full of electronics and laying your ruler along a metal bar, most people would, quite rightly, choose the latter. It's in keeping with the nonsense attending the adoption of metric that we use units as small as the gram and millimetre, the second a measurement many people can hardly see. It means that quite small amounts and lengths have to be expressed in three figures, which makes mental arithmetic difficult if not impossible.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES FYFFE
London, NW6
1 October

From Mr Ian Duke
Sir: What about hens? When small as the gram and millimetre, the second a measurement many people can hardly see. It means that quite small amounts and lengths have to be expressed in three figures, which makes mental arithmetic difficult if not impossible.

Yours faithfully,
IAN DUKE
Thames Ditton,
Surrey
2 October

preservation to take up residence. "Honesty to materials" can then be accompanied by "truth to the ideas one imposes on others".

If, however, the decision is to demolish, let not their architects feel anguished. For they have succeeded in their aim. Their blocks did change society - or, rather, the people whose lives were led inside them.

Yours faithfully,
MATTHEW COOPER
Bromley, Kent

From Mrs Judith Harvey-Rogers
Sir: In your article "On the banks of the Thames, a 40-foot bust of Churchill" (20 September), it is stated that the Churchill Society has supported the erection of a monumental-sized sculpture of a bust of Sir Winston Churchill on the South

bank of the Thames. This is incorrect. At no time has the society been consulted or involved in any way with this project.

Yours faithfully,
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The Churchill Society
Ipswich,
Suffolk
25 September

Tell the truth in Parliament

From Mr Michael Burrell
Sir: Your front-page story ("Secrets of the MPs who help lobbyists," 3 October) is not a balanced account of what I said at a conference on Monday and, subsequently, to your Westminster correspondent Chris Blackhurst.

After the conference he asked me to amplify comments I had made about the House of Lords. It rapidly became clear that he meant the House of Commons, since his interest was in standing committees which deal with Bills. The committee stage for a Bill in the Lords is taken on the floor of the House, not in a standing committee.

I repeated to him - common knowledge, not a "secret" - that MPs who wanted to sit on a standing committee for a particular Bill would seek to speak on Second Reading, since demonstrating an interest in the Bill in this way was one of the factors taken into account by the party whips when they recommend who should be on the committee.

I said that MPs who wanted to be on a committee would be well advised to demonstrate an interest in the Bill as a whole, rather than just a narrow point, and to speak in a moderate (not moderated) rather than an extremist way.

I was, indeed, angry, not for the reason implied - I have never known an MP who said one thing to get on a committee, and then said another - but because your reporter's question bore no relation to the point I was making.

Chris Blackhurst chose not to report one of the main pieces of advice I gave at this conference, as at every conference I have ever spoken at on lobbying - "tell the truth".

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BURRELL
Managing Director
Westminster Strategy
London, SW1
3 October

From Mr Michael Parkin
Sir: The caption to David Elserdian's article "The art of lying" (23 September), refers to Bruno Hat as a "non-existent artist". Although Hat was the invention of Brian Howard, Evelyn Waugh and Harold Acton, the highly accomplished rope paintings attributed to him were actually by John Banting and were produced for an exhibition at the house of Bryan Guinness (later Lord Moyne) in Grosvenor Street, Westminster on 23 June 1929.

Lady Diana Mosley thought the paintings lovely and one which I still own was actually purchased by Lytton Strachey.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL PARKIN
London, SW1
26 September

From Mr E. M. Noyes
Sir: Perhaps the German finance minister, Theo Waigel, expects a lively currency, as the Euro is a variety of small kangaroo.

Yours truly,
E. M. NOYES
Gomshall,
Surrey,
2 October

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Gomshall,
Surrey,
2 October

Wired up and baring his soul

Tony Blair's youthful new Britain is tinged with nostalgia and revivalism. But it does offer a choice

What was Mary Wilson thinking? Tony Blair was giving her, and us, an early taste of the early Sixties, when Britain seemed optimistic, smart and young again. Though a Durham schoolboy when Harold Wilson was white-hot, intellectually Blair is a child of that brief, sunlit time, who echoed Kennedy and Wilson in his celebration of youth, of technology, of patriotism and in his central claim, that the state can be used for Christian purpose.

To say that his vision of newness is tinged with nostalgia is not to sneer at it. What was wrong with Wilson wasn't his language but that he betrayed his words by his actions in power. Revisionist history has demolished the icon of Kennedy, reducing him to a perpetually tumescent warmonger. But the rush of political idealism both men described and stood for during that short period of Western optimism was precious. It was the essence of all progressive politics. Was then – and is now.

In being as youthfully, almost boyishly, idealistic, Tony Blair was showing his true self and disinterring an aspect of the Sixties that has been too generally forgotten by the low disillusioned decades that followed. But he was taking a risk with his project and with the rest of us, for his basic proposition was not political. It was religious.

He described the next general election as nothing less than "a battle for the soul of our nation". He spoke of his generation as one which enjoyed a thousand material advantages over any previous one, but which suffered "a depth of insecurity and spiritual

doubt they never knew". They were "frightened for our future and unsure of our soul". By contrast, he wanted a "country reborn". This is the language of revivalism. Blair's offer was less a change in the priorities of the administration, than the promise of spiritual regeneration.

All political leaders go it a bit. But this was going a lot. What follows is that people will either feel the faith, and be unusually inspired, jerked back into an interest in politics, or they will turn away in disgust. As a nation we have been let down before by fine-sounding political promises and it is a dangerous thing to tamper with our precious cynicism.

Had Wilson and Kennedy not raised such hopes, their later fallibility might not have aroused such bitterness. For Blair to escape that, he must be offering a solid, worked-out series of policies which he has some chance of implementing. On that test, how well did he do?

When it came to political reform, there was the sense of ambition and the bones of a programme that really would change this country. Here at least, his claim to make this a "young country" again has substance. Labour proposals on local government are particularly radical. I would have liked a stronger message on pluralism. But that's a carp – there comes a point when erecting hurdles for a politician and then booing when he clears them starts to look a little churlish.

Across the broad range of public services, this was an unequivocal attack on Tory neo-liberalism but one which failed to give us all the answers we need.



ANDREW MARR
Columnist of the Year

It is a dangerous thing to tamper with our precious cynicism

On education in particular, the pledge that there would be "no return to selection, academic or social" came naked and surrounded by question-marks. What does this mean for the large number of state-sector schools which are already selecting? What does it mean for the Oratory? I didn't get the impression afterwards that this had been thought through.

His most dramatic flourish was the revelation of Labour's agreement with British Telecom about cabling up schools, hospitals, libraries and other public institutions. This was one of a series of announcements that helped to convey the impression that Labour wasn't only poised to govern but had almost started governing already.

Other examples include the use of Professor Robert Winston's ideas on regional centres of excellence in health specialisms, and the warning on rail privatisation, which will affect the price of the sale – and may help to

scupper it. But even the promises on wiring up Britain left some key questions hanging. The most political problem is the dominance of Murdoch's empire in the pay-TV sector, as he develops his black box control system and slowly but methodically mops up the sporting events once available to every viewer. For reasons which are not hard to fathom, this tricky question was avoided.

The idea of Blair already being a powerful player who deals in a practical way with other powerful players, is an important part of his strategy. BT had had similar conversations with the current government but they broke down when the company was unable to get the relaxation of regulations it wanted. It is only a little startling that they turned to Labour.

It all helps make the idea of a change of administration seem thinkable, even inevitable. Even so, there is a residual big-boy corporatism in the party which it needs to be careful about. The generation now running Labour are Wilson's children in more ways than one.

So this was not a perfect speech. It was rather too long and conventionally shaped. As a platform poet, Tony Blair will never match the coiled, nape-ticking anger of Kinnock at his best, or the chatty thoughtfulness of Paddy Ashdown.

But after that hour of oratory yesterday, Conservatives who allege that Blair has nothing to say bar platitudes and generalities will have a far harder job convincing the country that they're right.

For there is a programme emerging here with the capacity to generate

national excitement, if we choose to let ourselves become excited. There is an ideology, too – though interestingly there is no word that quite describes it. Blair is not a socialist. "Social democrat" underplays the political reformism and the moralism of his platform. And he is no kind of liberal, neither neo-liberal nor old liberal, not an economic liberal, and not a social liberal, either.

Maybe we are simply going to have to talk about Blairism and leave it at that. Perhaps, even before he makes his bid for power, this man has already earned the right to be a noun.

And the noun is certainly in control of its party: for what was cheerfully absent from the speech was lengthy navel-gazing about the nature of Labour. It wasn't needed because that battle is over. A party which is embracing Lord Owen's admirers and leaving (go on Arthur, be bold) may not be new. But it's utterly different from the Labour of old. From Blair's point of view, his party has moved from being a dilemma to being a weapon.

Now it must be wielded in what looks like being a punishingly long political campaign, stretching from this winter right to the spring of 1997. This week really could affect the eventual result. It could have gone badly wrong for Labour. But the party is holding firm and its leader is on song. We can no longer say we don't have much of a choice.

I don't really believe nations have souls, but if they do, Tony Blair's battle for the soul of ours is going to be an epic.

Deeply fried, deeply satisfied

I don't know exactly why, but I was curiously exhilarated by the news this week that a deep-fried battered Mars bar (with a side order of chips) has become the latest culinary craze north of the border.

It certainly isn't because I want to eat one – I can't really face a Mars bar *and* the thought of the warm gloop of the interior doesn't exactly tease the palate. In texture I guess it would be something like a toffee-flavoured oyster. But there was something heroically gross about the idea that caught my imagination. It was as if a team of dietary freedom fighters had carefully worked out the most devastating combination of sugar and fat conceivable before releasing it into the teenage subculture – a secret weapon of corpulence and cardiac arrest aimed at the heart of the health lobby.

I haven't encountered such a reckless disregard of alimentary safety since I was at school and discovered that many boys ate their breakfast sausages with a thick top-dressing of marmalade (the closest Lancaster Grammar could get to a chutney, I suppose).

The next day several newspapers reported that the Government was sitting on an official report which warned that we are getting fatter by the minute. They sat on it rather heavily, so it leaked (the image that comes to mind is of a portly pin-striped bottom descending on a jam doughnut). In 10 years' time, if you believe the report of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Task Force, a quarter of all British men and one-fifth of women will be clinically obese. Most of them, presumably, will be Scottish – munching their way towards 2005 by filling that niggly gap between meals with enough calories to power a small Highland town.

Most journalists put the non-appearance of the report down to Government bad faith, but I wonder myself whether they haven't just given up in despair, ground down by the clear evidence that most people are happy to eat themselves into an early grave. My own confidence in the power of governments to adjust the diet of their citizens took a grave knock some years ago, after a visit to a Brixton supermarket.

The woman in front of me had children hanging from both sides of her cardigan and a baby cradled beneath a trembling finger of cigarette ash. On the conveyor belt were laid three jumbo aqualungs of Pepsi (non-diet), a frozen pizza, several packets of those vivid orange snacks that look like packing material and some more cigarettes. "Zit

orright if I pay for this wiv milk tokens?" she asked when she reached the check-out. The cashier nodded in a defeated sort of way. He had clearly lost too many arguments about the calcium content of Cheesy Wotsits.

The simple problem is that junk food is often more delicious than mediocre healthy food. Set a greasy chip butty, laced with sugary tomato ketchup, against a plate of flaccid green beans and boiled cod, and most people will know immediately where their taste buds are pointing. You might enjoy the latter meal, by disciplined exertion of will, but only because it is heavily sauced by a sense of doing the right thing.

Healthy food is an acquired taste, one that requires a modest exercise of skill and the expenditure of time. Junk food, on the other hand, does all the acquisition for you, flooding your mouth with the



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

instant, addictive gratifications of sugar and fat. Like Pavlov's dogs we salivate when the convenience food manufacturers ring our bells.

Only one thing will really change that – and it isn't government exhortations that we eat more carrots, or increased expenditure on cycle paths. Somehow they have to make deep-fried Mars bars taste bad – and education is probably the only way to do that. The flavour of mortality is an insidious one, even in small quantities, and it is capable of tainting the most delicious combination of poisons.

It's worth pointing out, incidentally, that the deep-fried Mars bar isn't by any means the first instance of chippy innovation. For many years the local fish and chip shop near my wife's childhood home in Preston has sold deep-fried jam butties. They even come with a health warning, though it isn't one that offers much hope to dietary reformers. "Please do not give battered [sic] jam butties to young children", reads a hand-made notice Sellotaped to the counter. "The jam gets [sic] very hot and can scald". Disfigurement, in other words, is broadly acceptable if it takes years to show, but not if it's instantaneous.

Miles Kington is away.

The media and the US legal system take equal blame for the spectacle of the OJ Simpson trial

Virtual reality of TV justice

The OJ Simpson trial was perhaps the most sensationally globalised legal process in history. Television carried the whole of the nine-month-long procedure around the world, making Judge Lance Ito, defender Johnnie Cochran, prosecutor Marcia Clark and Simpson himself as familiar as any *Baywatch* babe or soap stud. Wherever you travelled those faces could be seen on TV or in newspapers, always frozen in the narrow confines of that courtroom and always betraying the fallen, corrupt consciousness that this show was turning them into stars.

Simpson himself was, of course, a star already – an American football



BRYAN APPELEYARD

hero and movie actor. And that was the point. Here was a man whose place in the American consciousness was so well defined that his trial had to be a show trial. Here was a hero who might be a killer. The American public had a right to know the truth, for, to them, fame is a matter of legitimate public interest. Fame is valid, fame is important, fame enhances the right to know.

So the trial became, literally, a show trial. Simpson had \$3.6m to spend on his defence and the state of California had \$35m to spend on the prosecution – for that kind of money you could make a big movie. And so, of course, they did. Johnnie Cochran's closing speech could have been modelled on Spencer Tracy's performance in *Inherit the Wind* or Paul Newman's in *The Verdict*. At every point in the trial you could feel the pressure of old movies or TV shows, pushing the performers to play it for the cameras, to play it the way the jury and the television audience expected it to be.

And this, surely, is the first big lesson of the trial: courtrooms should never, under any circumstances, be televised.

The arguments for televised trials seem strong. If justice should be seen to be done, and if we already have public galleries, then there seems no logical reason to exclude cameras. On the face of it they merely have the



Star turn: Johnnie Cochran re-creates a Spencer Tracy courtroom drama role

Photograph: Reuters

effect of increasing the number of seats in the gallery. They are a neutral technology that simply assists the dissemination of the edifying and salutary spectacle of justice at work.

But the Simpson trial demonstrates conclusively that cameras are not neutral. By extending the audience from tens to millions, the camera introduces a new reality that is not merely quantitative. That reality is mass entertainment. The audience is not locked in a courtroom with nothing to watch but the trial. It is at home with a remote control, watching the trial as a show, as one viewing opportunity among many. It even, thanks to the too-familiar courtroom geometry, looks like other shows – *Perry Mason*, *The Defenders*, whatever. The TV manners of the US courtroom are as generically ritualised as those of the sit-com. And once televised trials are like this, then all trials have to be, because that is what juries expect.

Television transposes the court from a physical to a virtual realm. Its reality and significance are relativised. It must compete, it must play the mass game. This game requires shorthand, instant recognisability. So it forces conventions on the participants.

In Los Angeles a media-comprehensible reality was imposed upon the world to make it palatable to an audience educated not to believe the evidence of their own minds – that truth is difficult, reality ambiguous and people, even famous people, are unfathomable. Once you abandon this awareness for the cheap imperatives of a TV show, then justice, an absolute at least in theory, becomes self-evidently impossible.

You could see the corrupting need for these mendacious conventions in Cochran's approach to the defence. He wanted to convince the jury that this trial belonged to a particular cinematic genre, the genre of liberal

defence attorney fighting a corrupt, racist system riddled with evil plots. Get the jury to recognise the movie type and they would have no choice – in this genre the defendant, guilty or not, is always innocent.

So everybody in the courtroom was trapped in a bizarre, cultural loop. Movies and television shows are made about trials. Directors touch them up in all the right places – enlarge characters, heighten drama. People watch the movies. That, they decide, is what justice must be like. Then they go on juries. Lawyers cannot afford to disappoint them, so they start acting like Tracy or Newman. Live television comes along with all its attendant claims to "realism". The lawyers ham it up even more. Even the not-guilty verdict was delivered with a suitably filmic, agonising pause. Amazingly we discover that "real" justice is just like the movies because, by now, it is.

The horror of all this is that some-

where at the start of this particular movie there were real bodies with real blood and, even though he's famous, Simpson was always a real man facing the possibility of a real sentence. Yet who, deluged with this TV overkill, could really keep that in mind? Television banished real human suffering by lulling us into thinking this really was a movie.

But it was not just the fault of television. It was the whole American legal system that allowed this to happen, allowed money and fame to corrupt its proceedings. There are about 25,000 murders in the United States every year. Say they all came to trial and got the full OJ treatment – TV super-

TV banished real suffering by lulling us into thinking this really was a movie

expensive lawyers, months of evidence and so on. That means each one would cost around \$40m – and within months the US economy would have ground to a halt.

But it doesn't happen, it can't happen, because the big lawyers don't care about those little crimes. It is only when the defendant is rich and/or famous that the lawyers spot the chance of major fees. TV appearances, books and so on. It's bad enough to know that the Simpson trial was an event created by the movies and the media, even worse to know that it was all done in collusion with lawyers. Once again the flagrant racket that is the American legal system is exposed. So much for Jefferson, so much for Lincoln, so much for the Enlightenment.

Amid all this, the best, the most poignant joke of all was the jury – kept off the TV screens to protect their anonymity and "sequestered" in hotel rooms to prevent contamination by the media coverage. There they were, the quarantined distillation of the Republic's common sense, wondering what it all meant and who, if anybody, they were supposed to be.

It couldn't work, of course. Only jurors who had never seen a television screen could be sufficiently pure to judge Simpson. Only a few saints, mystics and lunatics would have qualified. They, in a world of TV justice and US lawyers, would be the only ones who knew anything for certain.

Generation Why



by Tony Reeve and Steve Way

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COMMENT

"Bankers don't like running things, and given the chance to get their money back, they were always going to take it, despite the promise of the future"

No free ride to Canary Wharf for Reichmann

The Reichmanns were always unusual as property developers and financiers. Deeply religious, their reputation was for austerity and plain living. Even after they had achieved what for most would be wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, they and their senior executives continued to drive around in stripped down Fords - one sun visor, no stereo, one wing mirror, no chauffeur. Their no-frills lifestyle endeared them to bankers, who naively believed they could do no wrong. As a consequence, the Reichmanns were allowed to do things that others could only dream of.

One of them was Canary Wharf, a project which, even before the property collapse, seemed wholly insane from a commercial point of view. When the end came, the Reichmanns blamed the Government, the City, the banks - everyone but themselves. To some extent, they had a point. The Government, having actively encouraged the development, failed to provide adequate transport infrastructure. The City did its best to sink Canary Wharf by sanctioning just about every alternative Square Mile development that could be conceived of. The banks were unforgiving and refused to forgo their pound of flesh. But the other ingredient was hubris and that belonged entirely to the Reichmanns.

One of the generalisations that can always be made about white elephants is that the money to make them possible only becomes available at the top of the cycle. Another is

that during the following upturn, often under new ownership, they have a tendency to come right, in part vindicating the visionaries who initially made them possible.

That is what seems to be happening with Canary Wharf, now 75 per cent let and rising, with the vital Jubilee lifeline only a couple of years from completion. Paul Reichmann has chosen his moment to regain his empire, as always using somebody else's money. Bankers don't like running things, and given the chance to get their money back, they were always going to take it, despite the promise of the future.

Whether any banker or investor is going to lead Mr Reichmann the money to begin work on the second and third stages of the development is another matter. Already there is an ominous feeling of déjà vu about events and that is not just because of the return of Mr Reichmann. The Corporation of London will fight the phoenix-like rise from the ashes of Canary Wharf tooth and nail. Mr Reichmann stands a better chance of succeeding second time round, but he is not going to get a free ride.

A happy end in sight for BA

British Airways must scarcely be able to believe its luck. The investment in US-Air has hung like a decaying albatross around its neck for so long, the whiff doing

no good at all for its share price, that the sudden prospect of the bird being transformed overnight into a highly fragrant and much sought-after golden goose is verging on the corporate fairy tale.

The news that a bid battle is developing for the troubled American carrier has sent BA's - and investors' - hopes soaring. They see the prospect of a happy end to what has become a grizzly story of frustration, as BA watched other European rivals make more of relatively trouble-free links with US airlines, while it struggled with what became known in the trade as US-Scare. As one observer put it, "It's BA's get out of jail free card."

Certainly, it would take care of USAir's financing problems. BA, which earlier this year wrote off £125m from its USAir stake - about half its investment - has said it would not put another penny into the company until its problems were sorted. Now, it seems, other operators are queuing up to do so. BA's 24.6 per cent stake cost about \$19.50 a share, and yesterday's talk was that the bidding would start at around \$20. With other American carriers, such as Delta or Continental, also rumoured to be interested, a bid war could send the value of BA's stake soaring. It would be in a position to write back its investment, and could expect to receive the £15m or so in dividends that were deferred.

The big question for BA is, should it sell or should it sit on its rising investment? The company is clearly thinking of selling out if the price is right, and forming an alliance

with another US carrier. But establishing another partnership in the all-important US aviation market carries its own problems and BA would do better to stick with USAir, especially as the worst of its cost trauma seems to be behind it.

However comfortable BA's position suddenly looks, it would be wise not to get too excited. The stumbling blocks in the way of the deal are many, not least the practicalities of a merger between two of America's largest carriers. An airline merger is a difficult task at any time, and would be more so in the case of USAir, which has a history of union recalcitrance. There are also monopolies issues. United and American are already the top two airlines in the US, and a combination of either of them with USAir would create a monster able to dominate the US aviation industry.

Lesson in currency co-ordination

Six months ago, when the G7 ministers met in Washington, they promised "an orderly reversal" of the currency gyrations that had driven the yen to unheard-of heights in the first quarter of 1995. Now, as they prepare for their meeting this weekend, they can take some comfort from the success they have had in bringing about a stronger dollar and a weaker yen. Wary dealers have been showing a hard-won respect this week for the ability of

well-timed central bank intervention to get its way in the foreign exchange markets.

Clearly, however, it would have been much better if the yen bubble had never occurred. The turning point appears to have been the decision at the end of June by the US administration to pull back from the brink of a trade war over access to the Japanese car market. At the same time, the Japanese authorities finally woke up to the need to revitalise a moribund economy with long overdue cuts in interest rates, a further fiscal stimulus and the first tentative steps towards an earlier resolution of the banking crisis.

The lesson is clear: currency co-ordination can only work when it is being supported by national policies. Even so, the damage has been done, with the Japanese recovery set back by a year and European growth more sluggish as a result of the appreciation of the German mark against the dollar. Global growth has taken a hit.

This week's world economic outlook from the IMF is likely to confirm the gloomier outlook for global economic growth that the bond markets have been discounting for months. The effect of the slowdown has already been felt by Britain's exporters, contributing to the widening in the trade gap. The cause of international currency co-ordination may seem a remote one; the failure to achieve it has real consequences on the ground. Somehow or other, common ground must be found in complementary national policies to reduce the wild swings in exchange rates.

Norweb battle becomes electric as Texas Energy raises bid

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The battle for Norweb, the regional electricity company, intensified yesterday with an increased offer by Texas Energy Partners valuing Norweb at £1.74bn. Rival bidder North West Water is now widely expected to raise its bid for a second time but Texas also made it clear it was prepared to consider another counter attack.

In the most hotly contested takeover attempt in the sector so far, Texas raised its offer to £10.85 per share compared with North West's increased cash offer last week of £10.75 with an £11.05 in cash and shares.

The US group, a partnership between Houston Industries and Central and South West Corp (CSW), said its increase

provides shareholders with a "generous and certain return on their investment".

Tom Shockley, president and chief executive officer of CSW Enterprises, said: "In contrast, North West Water's cash and share offer contains a significant share element that may be adversely affected by a number of factors including a shortfall in the timing, scale and delivery benefits and the financial risk of diversifying into an activity of which North West Water has no direct experience." Mr Shockley said he was "disappointed" at having yet failed to persuade Norweb's board to recommend the new offer but added: "We will convince them."

The renewed offer came as the industry regulator, Professor Stephen Littlechild, issued a consultation document on

the Texas bid. Professor Littlechild said the bid raised some of the issues surrounding previous bids for regional electricity companies, including the holding of a public electricity supply licence by a subsidiary rather than a parent company.

He warned this raises concerns about the availability of resources, disposal of assets and the regulator's ability to obtain information. Professor Littlechild would make licence amendments to deal with these concerns, which would involve the ring-fencing of the electricity supply and distribution operations from other parts of the parent group. He also said Texas should not retain Norweb's stake in the National Grid Company, which is due to be floated later this year.

Norweb's board said it would

recommend neither offer because of their proximity in value. The company said it would make a recommendation "in due course in the light of North West Water's share price performance and the decisions of the various regulatory authorities". The bid by North West is unusual in that it is being examined by both Ofwat and the water watchdog, Ofwat.

North West Water declined to comment on the renewed offer from Texas Energy and said that it would respond in due course.

The company is expected to consult with its big shareholders before deciding its next move but the consensus among City analysts is that the water group is determined to absorb Norweb in its drive to become a major force in the region.

Alliance suing former chief

DAVID HELLIER

Alliance Resources, the oil and gas company whose shares have been suspended on the London stock market at 4.5p since early last month, yesterday issued legal proceedings against its former chief executive, the Cork businessman John O'Brien.

The company, which is now being run by a three-man management committee, says it is suing its former head for damages for alleged fraudulent misrepresentations, fraud and/or deceit, breach of his service agreement, breach of fiduciary duty as well as for reimbursement of certain sums received as a result of false declarations.

Mr O'Brien, who said yesterday he had "nothing to hide", is defending the writ and is op-

posing a Mareva injunction that was obtained by the company last month freezing his financial assets. The company's action relates to statements made in documents that accompanied a £7.2m money-raising exercise earlier this year.

Yesterday the company said the value of the Valentine Sugar Plantation, located 30 miles south of New Orleans, was less than had been described in the prospectus. The company took issue mainly with the prospects of a particular well, Well 14.

"As a result of investigations made by the company, it is now apparent that the true position in respect of this well has been concealed and misrepresented to the company by its former chief executive," a statement said yesterday.

The company said that con-

trary to indications given in the prospectus, it was now the company's understanding that the well, which was said to house a large gas discovery, was in fact never capable of commercial production and was finally plugged and abandoned in August this year.

As part of the lease there was a provision that in order to maintain its interest in the undeveloped field Alliance had an obligation to drill a well every 110 days. It is the company's contention that at the time of the money-raising, the company had not complied with this provision, but that Mr O'Brien had nonetheless indicated the company had been granted an extension on certain conditions.

The Serious Fraud Office was called in by the company last month and is still said to be

involved in conducting its own inquiries into Mr O'Brien.

Mr O'Brien said he had not been approached by the fraud office. "But I would be delighted to meet with them at any time."

Alliance says the company is still viable and that its shares will be able to be traded again when full-year financial figures are released later this month.

Mr O'Brien said yesterday the company's decision to proceed with the drilling of the Valentine well (Valentine 14) was based upon a substantial number of independent reports, which included a process of continuing evaluation.

"The decision to plug and abandon Valentine 14 was not my decision and appears to contradict the technical reports," he said.

Euromoney lands profits blow

BY CLIFFORD GERMAN

Euromoney, the glossy magazine that grew into a £300m media and conference group with 44 publications and 75 separate profit centres, shocked the market yesterday with a warning that profits in the year ending this month will be down about 25 per cent on the £24m it made in 1993-94.

Its activities mirror the confidence of the international banking and investment community, which has been shaken by the weakness of the in-

ternational bond and derivatives markets, the slump in emerging markets triggered by the collapse of the Mexican stock market last December, and the collapse of Barings Bank.

Padraig Fallon, the executive chairman, had warned at the half-way stage that margins were already under pressure but profits still rose 15 per cent to £10.4m. The outlook for bond markets has improved, the Japanese stock market has rallied, and the September issue of the magazine is fatter than ever, without any discounting of

advertising, Richard Ensor, the managing director, said.

Turnover will still have increased when the figures are reported to the Stock Exchange on 28 November, and profits in the core businesses are expected to be little changed on last year. Profits at Raven Fox, Petroleum Economist and Asia Law & Practice have held up well and Century House is expected to break even.

But profits at AIC, the organiser of conferences, seminars and training sessions, in which Euromoney has a 75 per cent

stake, have been almost wiped out, and restructuring costs of at least £2m are being charged to current year profits.

Problems have been concentrated in Western Europe and, to a lesser extent, in Latin America. The board expects to hold the final dividend at 29.5p, making 43.5p for the year. But analysts had been expecting profits of up to £27m, and the shares plunged 312p to 1083p, wiping 22 per cent off the overnight £300m market value of the company. Investment column, page 22

KPMG partners vote to create limited liability company

ROGER TRAPP

Partners' salaries and other financial details will be disclosed by the leading accountancy firm KPMG within three months as a result of its decision to create a limited company to carry out audits of publicly quoted and financially regulated clients.

The creation of KPMG Audit, which will be wholly owned by the partnership and capitalised at £50m, was confirmed by Britain's second-largest accountancy practice yesterday - so ending months of press speculation. A vote of the firm's 600 partners had been overwhelmingly in favour of the proposal, senior partner Colin Sharman told a press conference at London's Savoy Hotel.

Under the new arrangements, the company and individual partners can be sued, but partners not connected with the work at issue will be protected by limited liability.

The company will have a turnover of about £100m and expects to have 400 listed and 300 regulated clients plus their subsidiaries. Clients that do not fit into these categories of "public-interest" companies will continue to be audited by the partnership, with the 300 audit directors - currently partners - splitting their time between the two operations. Last year, audit business accounted for about £200m of KPMG's total fee income of more than £500m.

Mr Sharman defended partial incorporation against suggestions it might create confusion, saying the new structure would enable the practice to improve the management of

listed and regulated company audit business and "provide a clear division between audit and non-audit services". Clients whose audits were not being transferred to the new company would receive the same standards of audit service as the others, he added.

KPMG Audit will start work on audits relating to financial years starting in 1996. But the firm intends to publish an annual report for the financial year to 30 September in January.

Mr Sharman and his colleagues have not yet decided which firm will audit the combined accounts of the partnership and the company, but concerns over possible conflicts of interest will probably rule out another member of the Big Six leading firms.

KPMG, which has been advised on the matter by Lazards and the City law firm Slaughter & May, is convinced that its decision to protect itself from spiralling law suits by incorporating marks a turning point in the development of professional firms. It also believes publishing full annual results will set a precedent its rivals might be compelled to follow. The company says clients have been attracted by the idea of knowing as much about their accountants as they do about most other suppliers.

Coopers & Lybrand, the country's largest, and Price Waterhouse are among the leading firms known to be examining the issue, though neither would be drawn on their plans. However, John Roques, senior partner of Buche Ross, confirmed his firm's opposition to limiting



Colin Sharman: 'Bold step for accountancy profession'

liability in this way. While pointing out that he and his colleagues would look at the issue carefully, he said he was concerned that the profession may be perceived as becoming a "low-cost, low-quality, low-responsibility and low-risk supplier".

Mr Sharman, who will chair the 10-strong board of the new company, said the move was "a bold step for the accountancy profession, but one that we believe is necessary to protect and develop our business and our people in the next decade".

He added that clients had been overwhelmingly in favour

of it, and pointed to the endorsements of such well-known business figures as Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, chairman of NM Rothschild; Lord Alexander and Cable & Wireless chairman Lord Young.

The firm stressed that the move did nothing to weaken its support for the campaign to reform the principle of joint and several liability, under which auditors can bear the total loss in a corporate collapse regardless of their degree of fault. A Law Commission feasibility study on this issue is expected by Christmas.

Manweb

Shareholder information update

Manweb's response to ScottishPower's final offer

To hear your Board's advice call

0800 55 66 22
(English language)

or

0800 55 66 33
(Welsh language)

The Directors of Manweb plc are the persons responsible for this advertisement. Those Directors confirm that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, having taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case, the information contained in this advertisement is in accordance with the facts and does not omit anything likely to affect the import of such information. The Directors of Manweb plc accept responsibility accordingly.

business

Channel 5 licence set for this month

MATHEW HORSMAN

The licence to operate the new Channel 5 may be awarded as early as 19 October, following the regular monthly meeting of the board of the Independent Television Commission.

The 10 commissioners have already reviewed the four bids in detail, and last week asked staff to send final queries to the bidding groups. Channel 5 Broadcasting, led by Pearson and MAI, was asked about its programming budget, while Virgin TV, a consortium of Richard Branson's Virgin Group, Paramount Television, Associated Newspapers and HTV, was asked for assurances about its controversial retuning plan.

The retuning exercise – aimed at enabling viewers to receive the Channel 5 signal – could cost the winning applicant more than £100m. Three of the four bidding groups intend to visit every home in Channel 5 viewing areas, raising questions about security.

Virgin TV, which promises a youth-oriented programme schedule and a rich selection of made-for-TV movies, has opted for a selective retuning approach, and would encourage viewers to ring a free phone



Branson: To tune in with BT

number to arrange for a home visit by a retuner. BT has arranged to supply the telephone service. The ITC is believed to have received a letter from BT confirming its full backing for Virgin.

The evaluation process has generated an unprecedented amount of documentation at the ITC, as the commission endeavours to pre-empt any legal challenge to its decision.

All four bidders, including UKTV, the consortium led by CanWest, the Canadian broadcaster, which offered the highest bid at £36m, are believed to have passed basic quality thresholds. Virgin TV and Channel 5 Broadcasting both

bid £22,002,000, and could be asked to rebid in the event UKTV is disqualified. Of the two, Channel 5 Broadcasting is believed to have the edge on programming, particularly in its commitment to educational programmes.

But it appears unlikely the ITC will reject the UKTV bid on the basis of its controversial ownership structure. Under current rules, foreign companies are not allowed to control outright a Channel 5 licence holder. UKTV has established a UK-based trust to hold the bulk of the consortium's shares and the ITC is not believed to have the discretion to it "foreign-owned" under current strict guidelines concerning the definition of "control".

The ITC has reserved the right to prolong the evaluation period beyond November, the internal deadline. But it is believed to be aiming to render its decision at the October meeting. A re-bid between Virgin TV and Channel 5 Broadcasting, would require another 10 days.

The fourth bidder, New Century Television, led by Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB, is widely viewed as having proposed the best programming. But its low bid of £2m has apparently taken it out of the running.

Man Utd scores heavily off-field

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

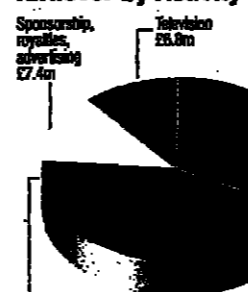
Edited by TOM STEVENSON

Manchester United: at a glance

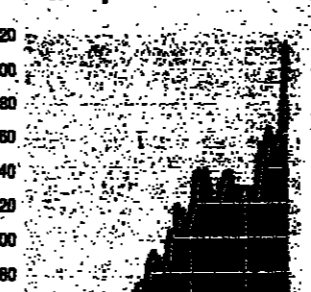
Market value: £124m, share price 204p

Trading record	1991*	1992	1993	1994	1995
Turnover (£m)	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8
Pre-tax profits (£m)	2.37	5.06	4.20	10.8	20.0
Dividends per share (pence)	0	3.5	3.9	4.2	4.5
*32 weeks					

Turnover by Activity



Share price



There are certain types of business that should never be publicly quoted companies, conventional investment wisdom suggests. They include advertising agencies and PR companies and certainly football clubs – businesses, in short, whose major assets get in their cars every evening and go home.

It is simply too risky, the argument goes, to invest in a company whose prospects can be so radically altered by the whim of a small number of employees. If Eric Cantona were to stamp his foot for the last time and walk out of Old Trafford for good, what then would Manchester United be worth?

Like all good investment saws, however, this one has an equally compelling refutation, the one adopted by Warren Buffett, the legendary American investor, who tries always to invest in companies that have a unique and irreplaceable business franchise. Manchester United, he might argue, shares many of the attributes of Coca-Cola and the Washington Post, investments that over the years have done Mr Buffett proud.

Certainly doubled profits yesterday, up from £10.8m to £20m, confirmed the strength of the Manchester United name. The club's biggest revenue generator last season was not gate receipts but sales of club strips, videos and mugs.

Profits from merchandising soared 65 per cent to £23.5m (£14.2m) as the club cashed in on the previous year's double-winning run. Returns from product sales were boosted by improved sales from all United's other divisions, advertising, conferences and gate receipts, which rose 10 per cent to £19.6m.

Ticket prices rose 13 per cent during the year, an inflation-busting rise that was repeated this season as rebuilding work restricted the supply of seats. In anticipation of these figures, United's shares have had a spectacular run, almost doubling since the start of the year, despite yesterday's 7p easing to 204p. They have quadrupled since the beginning of 1993.

As this season's cup disappointment shows, the quality of a large proportion of any football club's earnings are extremely volatile and unpredictable, and the short-term movements of the share price will always reflect that. In the long run, however, trends within football, and television coverage of it especially, will inevitably mean the leading clubs becoming richer and richer at the expense of the smaller players. A share to tuck away and forget.

Bankers' bible loses some gloss

A quarter of Euromoney's annual profits are made in the month of September alone as international banks and bond dealers gear up for the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. So it was not surprising the market

took yesterday's profit warning badly, pushing the shares 312p lower to 1,083p.

The magazine publisher and its major shareholder Daily Mail and General Trust have made a fortune over the last 25 years out of holding a reflecting mirror to the faces of the finance ministers and central bankers who hold centre stage at these meetings.

The number of pages in the September issue of the magazine is normally a fair reflection of the health of the international banking and investment community. But while this year's issue is as fat as ever, group margins have plainly been sharply squeezed in the second half. Full year figures are likely to be down about 25 per cent

from last year's £24m, reflecting restructuring costs as well as a slump in confidence among international banks.

The main problem seems to be in AIC, which operates the conferences, seminars and training services in which Euromoney has been building up its stake over the last four years to 75 per cent. AIC accounts for more than half the turnover, although it is a lower margin business, and has suffered losses in some of its newer offices especially in Western Europe. Regular conference schedules have held up well but attendances at its seminars have dropped off and a significant number have been cancelled in the last few months.

Staff have been laid off in the last couple of months, and the Amsterdam

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	P/Pre £	EPS	Dividend
Aradion Ltd (I)	9.4m (5.6m)	0.22m (0.07m)	0.1p (0.0p)	0.1p (nil)
Bioconcepts (I)	1.65m (0.42m)	-3.36m (-1.05m)	-0.9p (-3.19p)	nil (nil)
Biochemistry Publishing (I)	3.08m (3.13m)	-0.39m (-0.49m)	-4.55p (-6.02p)	0.68p (-)
James Hargest (F)	72.7m (69.1m)	10.3m (9.5m)	22.75p (22.5p)	8.5p (7.5p)
Ibstock (I)	122.2m (97m)	14.1m (4.36m)	3.78p (1.13p)	0.75p (0.5p)
Manchester United (F)	60.5m (43.8m)	20m (10.8m)	23.4p (12.2p)	4.5p (4.2p)
US Holdings (F)	24.3m (28.7m)	-0.74m (-2.11m)	-1.26p (-3.43p)	1.58p (1.56p)
Sainsbury (I)	85.2m (82.5m)	3.72m (4.11m)	5.22p (5.84p)	2.75p (2.75p)
(I) - Quarterly (F) - Final (I) - Interim				

Falklands lures oilmen

HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY

Excitement about one of the last – and potentially richest – unexplored regions for oil and gas in the world grew yesterday as 40 companies attended a presentation in London on the Falkland Islands' plans to explore offshore. Reports also emerged yesterday of plans to improve the rickety air communications between Chile and the remote archipelago.

In Stanley, the village capital of the Falklands, news of oil company interest came at the same time as earlier rumours of Argentina acquiring a direct interest in Falklands' waters were dispelled.

"People here think this could be the first day of a new era," said Patrick Watts of the Falkland Islands Broadcasting Service.

Councillor John Cheek, a

member of the Islands' Legislative Council, said that yesterday's turnout in London fulfilled expectations. A similar presentation will take place next Wednesday in Houston, Texas.

On offer are rights to drill in 12 blocks north of the Falkland Islands and seven to the south. The 19 areas comprise 44,000 square kilometres, which for decades have been thought to contain oil and natural gas in quantities larger than those presently being tapped by Chile and Argentina in their offshore waters nearby.

Applications have to be in by 2 July next year for exploration licences, which will be issued in September 1996. Interested companies, which may include Argentine firms provided they do not exercise majority control over any area or act as operator, may be given rights for three

initial periods of five, seven and 10 years, followed by a production phase of 35 years.

The Falkland Islands government has made clear that it will apply strict regulations to protect the environment.

Much-improved air links between Chile and the Falkland Islands could be inaugurated as early as next month. Aerovias DAP, a Chilean airline based in the southern port of Punta Arenas, which currently operates a Twin Otter on an uncomfortable five-hour flight without toilet facilities, is negotiating for a new aircraft, possibly a Fokker F 28 or BAe 148.

Such aircraft could fly from the Islands' Mount Pleasant airport to Punta Arenas in just over an hour and continue to Santiago, the Chilean capital, to connect with British Airways flights to London.

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Compass clinches \$250m IBM deal

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Compass Group has snapped up a contract worth \$250m to supply restaurant food and vending machines for 100,000 IBM workers at 29 sites across the United States for the next five years.

Compass, which started as a buyout from Grand Met and came to the market less than seven years ago, is now the world's largest food-service company, supplying meals to staff restaurants, schools, hospitals and airports, stocking vending machines in workplaces and operating contracts for the likes of Burger King and Pizza Hut.

The deal is the biggest single food service contract ever awarded in the US and possi-

bly in the world, Compass claimed yesterday.

Mike Bailey, president and chief executive of Canteen Corporation, the US division, said the deal was part of a rapidly developing trend for big US companies to negotiate supply contracts with a single supplier, and would add more than 5 per cent a year to the group's turnover in the US, which accounts for about a quarter of the group's business worldwide.

Although not in quite the same league as the acquisition this summer of Eurest International, a leading hotel caterer, for almost £600m, the deal moved the shares up 17p to 441p yesterday, valuing the group at £1.36bn, up £50m on the day.

Halstead buoyed by new vinyl floors

LUCY ROBERTS

A new generation of vinyl floor products and increased overseas sales helped motorcycle to commercial flooring company James Halstead continue its unbroken profit record.

The group overcame further pressure from raw material price increases to post a 4.3 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £10.32m for the year to end-October. Turnover rose from £69m to £72m. Vincent Clare, chairman, said a squeeze on margins in a competitive commercial flooring market had been offset by the upswing in export volume for its PVC flooring. Export business grew by 19 per cent and accounts for nearly half of sales, with flooring accounting for 17 per cent.

Polyfloor Australia, a core business, increased sales by 30 per cent on the back of the new vinyl product ranges, an improved distribution network and sales outlets in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

The group's outdoor clothing division, Driza-Bone, put on sales in the US, UK, Germany and France and remained profitable despite a margin squeeze caused by cotton shortages. The core of the company's camping business also remained resilient, particularly in Holland, Belgium and France. But there was a mediocre performance in the UK, where competition from cheap package holidays hit sales. Earnings per share rose from 21.68p to 22.75p and the final dividend of 5.5 raised the total for the year to 8.5p.

Lucy Roberts

CITY DIARY

Rupert Pennant-Rea and Rosalind Gilmore, who were yesterday appointed as non-executive directors to the board of BAT Industries, have both been embroiled in recent controversy.

Pennant-Rea stepped down as deputy governor of the Bank of England after admitting to an extra-marital affair, whereas Gilmore resigned last week from Lloyds after less than a year as director of regulation.

A BAT spokesman told me: "As a tobacco group we're used to controversy and unafraid of it. The two have got a big contribution to make, in spite of what may or may not have happened in their recent careers. And they are especially valuable because they know a lot about regulation in the financial services area."

Kate Murphy, international bond marketer at Nomura, plans to plunge off a roof today to raise money for the Motivation charity. She will be joined by 200 other like-minded professional women from the City, including Stephanie Field, director of asset trading at Lazard Brothers; Julius Baer, senior



Rupert Pennant-Rea: taking up new appointment at BAT

portfolio manager at Avril Griffiths, and Gillian Haseldin, a senior lawyer at Nomura. They will be off 110ft down a nine-storey building in Finsbury Square, Royal Marine commands will be on hand for those who need help getting over the top. "Making it an all-girl thing has definitely got the chaps to dig into their pockets," Murphy said.

Christopher Clement-Davies, divisional director of

The canny Yorkshire food company Nordale is profiting from the fortunes of Leeds United football club. News that the team's top scorer, Tony Yeboah, puts his prodigious goal scoring efforts down to the discovery of Yorkshire pudding saw executives of Nordale scuttle to the phones to offer free pads to quench Yeboah's pudding passion.

Their offer is two free pads for every goal and one for each fellow team member. Nordale has now despatched a total of 132 puddings to Elland Road. With 11 goals already so early in the season, Ian Whitfield of Nordale tells me he expects a hefty bill by the end of the season.

the specialist financing team within the corporate finance division at SBC Warburg, has joined solicitors Wilde Septe to expand its major project practice. He will be reunited with Bruce Johnson, who joins from Linklaters & Paines where Clement-Davies worked before joining Warburg in 1993. While at SBC, Clement-Davies worked on the London & Continental railways consortium, short-listed for the £2.7bn Channel Tunnel rail link project, and the modernisation of Russia's air traffic control system.

Abbey National, the titleholders, will face stiff competition from the likes of KPMG, Cazenove, Midland and National Westminster bank when they meet at next

month's City Monopoly challenge. The event, which aims to raise money for Children with Leukemia, is appealing for more teams.



FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

STERLING				DOLLAR				D-MARKS			
Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	3 month
US	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Canada	2.0000	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
France	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Italy	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Japan	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Switzerland	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Belgium	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Denmark	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Netherlands	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Sweden	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Spain	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Portugal	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Greece	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
India	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
China	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
South Africa	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Argentina	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Brazil	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Chile	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Colombia	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Costa Rica	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Cuba	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Ecuador	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
El Salvador	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Honduras	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Kenya	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Malaysia	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Philippines	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Singapore	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
South Korea	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Taiwan	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Thailand	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
West Germany	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Yugoslavia	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--
Other Countries	1.2702	15-11	23-14	1.2700	--	--	0.8944	--	--	0.8944	--

Source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Rates as of 10:30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, 10:00 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. All rates are for 100 units of foreign currency per 1 U.S. dollar. 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صلى الله عليه وسلم

sport

The last bastions of amateurism

After rugby union's switch to the professional ranks, you might think no one competes at the highest level purely for the love of their sport. Actually, they do. Mike Rowbottom reports

As rugby union sets off in earnest down the road marked "professionalism", the reverberations of its decision are passing through the main body of British sport. It is, in the main, an amateur body. For a huge number of sportsmen and women in this country, turning professional is simply not an option — the money is not there. Unlike football, athletics, cricket or rugby, their sports do not regularly attract large crowds, and so do not attract large television contracts. Or maybe it is the other way round. Either way, most are caught in a familiar situation — the phrase "Catch-22" has wide-spread currency in British sporting circles. But by no means everyone would embrace professionalism were it to become viable. Many are happy for it to remain the Road Not Taken.

Rowing, despite its dalliance with professional racing a century ago, remains one of Britain's most rigorously amateur sports. Even Stephen Redgrave, four times an Olympic champion, has effectively to earn his living with appearances for his sponsors in insurance and sportswear. "It is hard for Redgrave, at 28, she has established herself as Britain's leading single sculler. Despite being a qualified exercise physiologist, she has chosen to devote herself to training as she prepares for next year's Olympics. Thus she struggles by



It must be love: the dedicated few who relish rowing as 'one of the few remaining amateur sports in Britain' devote themselves to practice on the Thames near Putney Bridge. Britain's leading women's single sculler, Guin Batten (inset), says: 'Hardship makes me stronger in a perverse sort of way'

Photograph: Peter Jay

with a little help from her friends, family and a £2,000 grant from the Sports Aid Foundation. She estimates it costs £9,000 a year for her to row, quite apart from living costs. But she is not — she really is not — complaining.

"If, out of the blue, all our events were being televised and my club was offering to pay me to row, I think I would be able to handle it," she said. "But it would remove something."

"Rowing is the sport of sport where people say 'Sod everyone else, we're going to work and we

are going to achieve results.' They put their heads down and become an insular group."

"I'm not sure you could do that so successfully if you were being pulled in different directions, going to meetings, signing autographs. The other thing to consider is that if you are paid, and life becomes more comfortable, do you get softer? Does it mean as much to you?"

"When it really, really hurts coming into the last part of a race, I never think about the money I might earn. I just think

'I've put so much into this, this is for me. I definitely feel that hardship makes me stronger in a perverse sort of way.'

Jim Bichard, who coaches Batten and others at Thames Rowing Club, also identifies a "masochistic" streak to many rowers. "If we ever went professional it would really split the attitudes within the sport," he said. "It would cause a lot of hassle. I don't think it would make the sport any more competitive."

"We might not have won, but we always had a feeling that we were the best of the truly amateur sides. We were proud

of people in rowing like to think of it as one of the few remaining amateur sports in Britain."

That kind of attitude is not confined to rowing. Bernie Cotton, who played hockey for England for 10 years and went on to manage them between 1988 and 1992, recalls the feeling of satisfaction he and his team-mates felt when returning from major championships.

"We might not have won, but we always had a feeling that we were the best of the truly amateur sides. We were proud

about that. And I think people in the game still are."

Cotton now coaches his local side, Bishop's Stortford. "Our players arrive in the evenings brain dead after a hard day in the City," he said. "You can't do anything exotic in training. And at the weekend they drink far too much and have a good time. But that's what it's about."

There is something to be cherished about such a sporting life. Not that Cotton decries what attempts there have been

to transform hockey's status. In 1988, after Sean Kerly and Co had won the Olympic title for Britain, large sums of money began to flow into the sport. Cotton estimates that hockey was five years ahead of rugby union at that point. Remember this was before rugby established the Courage League structure and right at the start of the Geoff Cooke-Will Carling transformation of England's fortunes. But the lack of depth in spectator interest, and the absence of traditional money-making fix-

tures such as Twickenham boasted, undercut the enterprise. Like rowing and hockey, swimming has also raised its national profile on occasions, thanks to the achievements of such as David Wilkie, Duncan Goodhew, Adrian Moorhouse and Sharron Davies. But it also labours under the handicap of not being a great spectator sport and only the elite will be able to make some kind of a living in or through the sport.

"To be honest, I don't see swimming changing," said Paul Bush, director of swimming at the Amateur Swimming Association. "We are a relatively open sport, and I think direct payments will replace trust funds for competitors by the year 2000. But I don't think we would ever attract sufficient sponsorship and media attention to do what rugby is doing."

Mike Smith, chief executive of Basketball League Ltd, the company constituted by the 13 premier league clubs, identifies a growing challenge in keeping the balance between unpaid officials and paid competitors. Earlier this year Smith visited the United States, where he witnessed some of the changes made in the National Basketball Association, where there had been widespread concern over increasing levels of aggression and verbal abuse among players. There has been a toughening up of the rules in the US, and an increase from two to three officials in charge of games. "Maybe this is the kind of thing amateur sports' need to be addressing themselves to," Smith said.

Smith, however, believes the distinction between professional and amateur does not apply in his particular sport because of the way it evolved in this country in the early 1970s, when imported US players were paid and co-existed happily with unpaid home-grown team-mates. "The notion of professional and amateur is really an irrelevance in basketball," Smith said. In that respect, it is more open than most British sports.

THE GAIN GAME: SPORT-BY-SPORT GUIDE TO THE REWARDS AVAILABLE TO BRITONS AT PLAY

By John Cassy

Angling

Has a relaxed view on the subject of amateurism. Anglers in competitions tend to be fishing for prize-money and the underlying philosophy is: "If you can earn cash from angling, then good luck."

Athletics

Following years as an amateur sport, athletes can now receive money direct. The International Amateur Athletic Federation rules changed two years ago; previously money had to be paid into trust funds. Athletes can apply for a direct payment card which will authorise them to receive funds directly. The granting of cards is conditional upon full and complete compliance by the athlete and his representative with IAAF rules and regulations. The top athletes can earn £10,000-£50,000 per meet.

Badminton

There is no real differentiation, with professionals competing routinely alongside amateurs.

Basketball

Basketball is an entirely open game, although in Britain there is a salary cap to maintain competitiveness. The majority of British club sides consist of a mixture of professionals, students and amateurs. The annual team salary limit is £100,000. The policy has been successful, maintaining healthy crowd attendances and preventing domination by one club, as happened with Crystal Palace in the 1970s and Kingston in the 80s. Individual earnings range from £20,000 for top pros.

Boxing

A boxer loses his amateur status when he signs to a professional manager, which usually happens when the boxer has been head-hunted. Once the British Board of Boxing Control clears the application for the two to team up, the boxer is deemed a professional. New pros can expect as little as £250 per fight. The sky is the limit for the heavyweight champion of the world.

Canoeing

The International Canoeing Federation scrapped the sport's amateur status at their annual congress last year. Any sponsorship must be registered with the governing body.

Cycling

By the end of 1996 amateurism in cycling will be entirely dead. The track side of the sport is already open and in next year's Olympics there will be an open road race featuring the world's top professional cyclists as well as amateurs. Lesser-known pros earn around £10,000 a year, but the sport's biggest names can earn £2m-£3m during their careers.

Golf

A clear distinction remains between amateur and professional. For a golfer to retain his amateur status he must not be compensated for teaching or playing, must not play for prize-money and must not directly or indirectly promote products or appear in advertisements. Celebrity pro-am tournaments are

a grey area because celebrities, in being paid to appear, are effectively playing as professionals while retaining amateur status. Similarly hole-in-one competitions at amateur clubs, where the prize is money or a car, effectively make the winner a professional if they accept the prize.

Gymnastics

Gymnastics remains an entirely amateur sport. Any promotional payments to gymnasts must be cleared with the British Amateur Gymnastics Association first and then passed straight to the association. The cash is then put into a trust fund. No advertising is allowed to be displayed on clothing or equipment unless it is the approved trademark of the manufacturer. The rules are currently being revised for 1996.

Hockey

Hockey also remains an amateur sport, defining an amateur as a person who plays, umpires etc. by choice or as a diversion or for his physical or moral well-being and who does not directly or indirectly derive any profit or financial benefit therefrom. Payments for other activities may be made but they must go into a special fund. If a player is found to have breached amateur status then suspension is the usual result. Players cannot appear in sponsorship deals unless the association is bound into a specific contract with the manufacturer, and must not contract sponsorship for himself.

Judo

Top fighters are full-time professionals, others maintain jobs. The top fighters, training full-time, are funded by sponsorship. The very

best are on grants of about £18,000 pa. Lesser-known fighters compete for grants amounting to about £250 a quarter.

Rowing

Rowing is another sport proud to retain its amateur traditions. An amateur may not receive any contributions towards his expenses either in training or in competition except from the funds of the Amateur Rowing Association, or funds administered by the Association or the club which he represents. A rower may, however, accept free travel and accommodation provided that the club to which he belongs informs the Association, and he satisfies himself that acceptance will not be made the subject of an advertisement. Cash prizes go to the Association and the money is either used for expenses or held until retirement.

Show Jumping

The sport will be entirely open from January 1996. There has always been a distinction between amateur "competitors" and professional "riders" but from next year all riders will simply be competitors. Professionals will be able to take part in the Olympics when previously they have been excluded. The only restrictions placed on riders are that they are all required to hold a competition licence and they have to notify the British Equestrian Federation of any commercial sponsors they may have secured.

Skiing

Skiing in Britain remains an amateur sport with sponsorship money going through the Ski Federation. Expenses can be reclaimed through the competitor's fund in a similar way to gymnastics.

Squash

Squash has been an entirely open game since 1979. The top 50 players tend to be full-time pros with the rest combining jobs and playing. The top three players in Britain can earn up to £30,000 a year.

Swimming

The word amateur has been dropped from the sport. Swimmers can receive prize-money but it must go through a swimming fund administered by the Amateur Swimming Association. Accounts are held for each swimmer who can claim expenses once a month. The sport's biggest names can choose to create trust funds and invest some of their earnings. Although the world governing body, FINA, decided about 18 months ago that swimmers can be paid money direct, the ASA has chosen not to change its rules. The leading swimmers in the country can earn £15,000-£20,000 in a year.

Tennis

The decision to make the 1968 Wimbledon tournament an open event is seen as the crucial move towards widespread professional tennis. Tennis has always had professional coaches but prior to the 1968 decision the majority of professionals were found in the pro circuit that was played mainly in the United States. The first professional tournament here was launched in Bournemouth in 1968. The only place where amateurs remain in any number in tennis today is in the US college system, and the majority of them progress quickly to become fully fledged professionals. The earnings can be spectacular. In 1994, 13 professionals earned over \$1m (£550,000) each from prize money. Pete Sampras topped the list with \$3.6m. All of the top 160 earned more \$100,000 in prize-money last year.

Volleyball

Volleyball in Britain remains a totally amateur sport, but on the Continent, where the game has a much higher profile, players are routinely given jobs with the major companies who sponsor and run, the individual volleyball clubs. Within the game there is no objection or opposition to professionalism.

Cricket

Summary: Amateur and professional distinction abolished 1963.

Potted history: The game was fully governed well before the concept of amateurism entered sport, but the influence of the public schools meant that the amateur-professional divide was strengthened. As a result amateurs and professionals occupied different dressing-rooms, entered the ground through different gates and ate in different areas despite playing in the same teams. Changes began to take place after the Second World War and the distinction became increasingly blurred with players securing sponsors and the like. In 1963 the MCC, then the game's governing body, decided that the distinction should be done away with and all players were referred to simply as "cricketers". The first one-day game followed later that year.

Earnings: In 1995 a capped player would earn, on average, about £14,500; this figure will rise to about £18,000 next year. For the rest of the Test-playing nations the situation is slightly less clear-cut. In Australia in 1977 the advent of World Series Cricket was the big step towards professionalism. In the 1977 Centenary Test each Australian player received £52,000; by 1995 that figure had risen to around £56,500 (£3,250) per Test. While the West Indies have had a fully fledged professional side for the past 20 years or so the majority of the other Test-playing nations are at a half-way house stage. While their leading players are full-time professionals reaping the financial rewards of English professional county cricket, the other Test players and club players receive very little in the way of remuneration.

How the big four sports handle professionalism

Football

Summary: The game first allowed professionals in 1885, although there remained a distinction between professionals and amateurs. This was abolished in 1974 resulting in an open game.

Potted history: Football of professionals in the amateur game came to a head in January 1885 when a meeting between Preston North End and West Ham, the London club protesting that Preston had included professionals in their team. To everyone's surprise Preston admitted the allegation and despite receiving a ban their move effectively precipitated the march to professionalism. Though a motion was passed saying professionalism was "evil" and would "place more power in the hands of the betting men and sports-gamblers", a breasted spirit of openness away from the Football Association's official authority to enforce it in 1885.

In a final effort to retain some of the "gentlemanly spirit" of the game, rights to professionals were imposed. They took such that in all cup matches only professionals who were capped by their first division club during the past two years were eligible to play. The ban was eventually lifted in 1906. Earnings: 1994-95 Division One players earned £22,000 a year. Division Two players £18,000. Division Three players £14,000. Division Four players £10,000.

Rugby Union

Summary: The game is in a state of flux. New laws regarding player payments have just been announced.

Potted history: Traditionalists believe that the game was always an amateur sport, but pressure for professionalism grew because of the fact that the game was becoming increasingly professional. The game was first allowed to become professional in 1895. The game was first allowed to become professional in 1895. The game was first allowed to become professional in 1895.

Earnings: 1994-95 Division One players earned £22,000 a year. Division Two players £18,000. Division Three players £14,000. Division Four players £10,000.

Rugby League

Summary: Rugby League broke from the Rugby Football Union in 1895 to go professional.

Potted history: The game was first allowed to become professional in 1895. The game was first allowed to become professional in 1895. The game was first allowed to become professional in 1895.

Earnings: 1994-95 Division One players earned £22,000 a year. Division Two players £18,000. Division Three players £14,000. Division Four players £10,000.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 Unless stated
OCCASION CUP
2nd ROUND SECOND LEG
Blackburn (3) v Swindon (2) (7.45)
Cheltenham (1) v Stoke (1) (7.45)
Sheff Wed (1) v Bolton (1) (7.45)
Derby (2) v Shrewsbury (1) (7.45)
Barnet (1) v Millwall (1) (7.45)
Hull (1) v Scunthorpe (1) (7.45)
Alan City (1) v Wycombe (1) (7.45)
Newcastle (1) v Bristol City (1) (7.45)
Nott Forest (2) v Brentford (3) (7.45)
Oxford (1) v Tranmere (1) (7.45)
Sheff Wed (1) v Crewe (2) (7.45)
Sunderland (1) v Luton (1) (7.45)
Torquay (1) v Notts County (1) (7.45)
Walsley (1) v Barnet (1) (7.45)
BELLS SCOTTISH LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
Falkirk v Celtic
Hibernian v Aberdeen

Rugby Union

7.30 Unless stated
OCCASION CUP
2nd ROUND SECOND LEG
Blackburn (3) v Swindon (2) (7.45)
Cheltenham (1) v Stoke (1) (7.45)
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Rugby League

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Torquay (1) v Notts County (1) (7.45)
Walsley (1) v Barnet (1) (7.45)
BELLS SCOTTISH LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
Falkirk v Celtic
Hibernian v Aberdeen

Speedway

7.30 Unless stated
OCCASION CUP
2nd ROUND SECOND LEG
Blackburn (3) v Swindon (2) (7.45)
Cheltenham (1) v Stoke (1) (7.45)
Sheff Wed (1) v Bolton (1) (7.45)
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Torquay (1) v Notts County (1) (7.45)
Walsley (1) v Barnet (1) (7.45)
BELLS SCOTTISH LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
Falkirk v Celtic
Hibernian v Aberdeen

Golf

7.30 Unless stated
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Blackburn (3) v Swindon (2) (7.45)
Cheltenham (1) v Stoke (1) (7.45)
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Walsley (1) v Barnet (1) (7.45)
BELLS SCOTTISH LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
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Hibernian v Aberdeen

Hockey

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BELLS SCOTTISH LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
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Squash

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Boxing

Football
